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THE THEORY OF ETHICS

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THE THEORY OF ETHICS

BY
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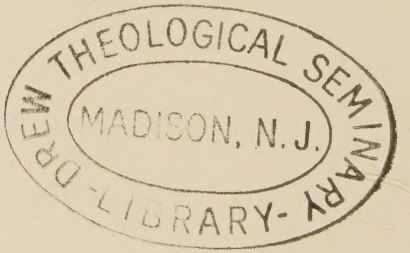

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PREFACE

The logical framework of the position which as a matter of theory I have here attempted to defend will be found more particularly in the first three chapters. These undertake to be a connected piece of reasoning which to some extent stands or falls as a whole. The two more essential features are the conception of value, and the naturalistic theory of duty as having its source in certain negative emotional restrictions on the positive life of desire. In view of the fact that I disagree with his conclusions on almost every point, I should like to acknowledge a special obligation to the ethical writings of Mr. G. E. Moore.

I have drawn to some extent in the following pages upon articles published at various times recently in the *Philosophical Review*. The analysis has however been sharpened at a good many points; and I trust the argument has been made more convincing by being brought together in a connected form.

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The Theory of Ethics

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF GOODNESS

A Definition of Ethics.—A very cursory survey of the ethical experience will reveal the fact that there are two main aspects, or differences of emphasis, which the human concern for conduct has shown. It is natural that men should first have their attention called explicitly to problems of conduct when they are interfered with in the ordinary course of doing what they like to do, and that morality therefore should connect itself in the first instance with the special sort of consciousness that goes with pressure placed upon desire. "Being good," so popular opinion still inclines to hold, is thus primarily an affair of what we should *not* do, a matter of obeying the negative commandments; and it is often felt to be not incompatible with a drab and anemic character such as quite definitely offends our more virile taste. And even where the negative emphasis attains, through the intensive cultivation of the will, a high degree of force and robustness—in the Stoic, for example, with his relentless self-control, or in that Puritan spirit which overthrew settled monarchies and conquered the wilderness—it yet is too harsh and grim to excite in the average man any impulse to emulation. He may admire it from a distance as he might some titanic display of the forces of nature; but

as an ideal of a good and satisfying life it will seem to him almost a travesty.

It would appear accordingly that for average human nature such a negative emphasis fails to justify itself for the most part except in subordination to a more positive motive. Restraint and negation are worth their price only as they are requirements to be submitted to in the search for fulness of life and satisfaction. Here ethics becomes a name, not now for the claims of duty, but for the interest man has in discovering and realizing the ends that make life positively worth living. It is this positive emphasis that will be presupposed as fundamental throughout the subsequent pages. So understood, the task of ethics resolves itself into a single supreme inquiry to which all others are subordinate: What is the nature of human *good?* In this way, it becomes unnecessary to defend at length the value of ethics as a science. Its utility is bound up with the undoubted fact that ends are much more likely to be attained when we are reflectively aware of what their nature and conditions are. A man, says Thoreau, in the long run hits only what he aims at. There may be occasional lucky individuals whom nature has set on a straight course; they know instinctively what they want, and suffer from no apparent temptation to be led aside into bypaths. But these are exceptions; the great majority of men are forced to grope more or less blindly after the conditions of a satisfying life, and are even fortunate if after devious wanderings they happen on it at all. It is to reduce to some extent the need for blind fumbling, and hit-or-miss experiment, that intelligence comes in. Intelligence does not indeed supplant experiment carried on under rational conditions. One of the things it will be important to keep in mind is that human good is seldom to be come at just by thinking. A

man cannot sit down in his study and reach authoritative conclusions about the exact nature of what it is that will satisfy his blanket demand for a good life; still less is he able to settle by reflection what his neighbor needs to do for *his* satisfaction. Some ethical theories have indeed implied that he can do this. Man, they have held, is equipped with an authoritative organ, called conscience, for discovering absolute good; and he has only to set this in operation to arrive at unquestionable decisions. From this standpoint, it is familiarly assumed that one need have no difficulty in determining what it is right for him to do; all evil conduct has its source merely in the fact that he *will* not do what his conscience plainly tells him. But this is to misread experience badly. Often the stress of the moral situation is owing to the fact that we genuinely do not know what is the good; and no reflective scrutiny of the facts will tell us. The only thing then open to us is to act on probabilities, and so put ourselves in the way of learning more than we at present see. But we can, by the use of intelligence, prevent experiment from being purely haphazard. We can rule out certain alternatives, can survey the situation as a whole to see that we have not overlooked important considerations, can form such hypothetical combinations of the elements involved as in the light of past experience and present insight seem most likely to offer a satisfactory plan of action. And ethics may be defined as an attempt to be forehanded and foresighted on a large scale, and to lay down, ahead of the immediate needs of conduct, the lines along which successful living is likely to run.

The Good and "Goodness."—Before however turning to the main issue and attempting to draw up a statement of the character attaching to the good or genuinely satisfying life, there is a preliminary and less practically inter-

esting question which the theorist will find it useful to raise. Instead at once of asking what is *the* good, it is desirable to consider first what we mean by "goodness." The distinction, though it may not be immediately apparent, is not difficult to see. If I were told to pick out all the blue objects in a room, I should have no trouble in distinguishing the question, What objects here are blue? from the question, What is blueness? And in some sense I must have the means of answering the second query before I can start in on the first; if I do not already know what blue is, it will be useless to ask me to point out blue things. In the same way I could hardly undertake to settle what things in particular in experience are to be called *good*, unless I were already able to use the term goodness understandingly. So that the first problem logically of an ethical analysis is to undertake to find out what we mean by that abstract quality "goodness" which we assign to certain objects when we call them good.

In the case of blueness there is no difficulty in making clear to ourselves, and to other people, what we mean by the term, though we might be bothered if we had to put it in the form of a verbal definition. The quality is there so conspicuously in every instance of a blue object that it is a simple matter to distinguish it from its surroundings, and tell others how to go to work to identify it by getting the same experience. But goodness presents a more troublesome case. We do not find goodness in the object staring us in the face as blueness does; its character is of a much more subtle sort. That we can *recognize* it is of course to be assumed. But to say just *what* we understand by it is by no means easy, and requires a considerable effort of analysis.

We may then note by way of introduction a few examples of the things to which we naturally apply the adjec-

tive "good." We say that a knife is a good knife when it cuts well, or that a furnace is a good one when it heats the house properly. We say, This dessert is very good, meaning that we like its taste; or, It is good to get home again, after a tedious journey. We may say that this is a good specimen of a Boston terrier, or of Henry James' early manner, meaning that it approaches some ideal case which for whatever reason we take as a standard. We say, again, He is a good man, or, That is a good and noble act, where we find that to insert the word "morally" helps to bring out what we have in mind. Illustrations could of course be multiplied indefinitely, but these will I think be found to be sufficiently typical.

It needs only a slight examination to show that in the above examples good is not always used with precisely the same meaning. The first two instances are the most straightforward and unambiguous; here good evidently means no more than, "useful for a specified purpose." The other cases however refuse to reduce themselves merely to the status of means appropriate to an end. When for example I say that the dessert is good, I do not have to go on and ask, Good for what? as I do when speaking of the knife or furnace; indeed if I try to ask this question I discover that it has no obvious meaning. The pleasant taste to which I apply the word does not need to be justified as a means to something further. It is just good; and if anyone saw fit to deny this, and to say that a pleasant flavor was no better than a nasty one, I should consider that it hardly called for refutation. I might to be sure mean something different by the statement that the dessert is good; it might also be good *for* something—my health or my digestion. But except in health-food advertisements, no one is under any temptation to confuse healthfulness with the more immediate and

essential goodness that appeals to the natural appetite. And even if we intend to say that an article of food is good for the health, we still have not recommended it in the least unless we can assume that health too is good; and health is again a good in itself, irrespective of its further utility for something else. And always, we shall find, in so far as it has any bearing on human motivation and action, goodness as means is relative to an end which also is in some sense good; sooner or later we are bound to come to what to our natural thought needs no further justification in terms of utility, but is good in its own right. And it is with the goodness of ends that ethics as an ultimate inquiry has to do. Before we can actually secure the good we must, to be sure, discover also the means to its attainment; and this requires a scientific understanding of the nature of the world in which we live and act. But first we have to be clear about the sort of end for the sake of which the means are to be selected. And it is the primary business of ethics, in terms of practice, to help us make sure that this end is itself good, in the more ultimate sense of the word.

We have then to determine what we mean by goodness when it is applied, not to means, but to ends of conduct. And this would seem to make irrelevant also the meaning that is suggested by the third pair of examples. It might indeed be proper in ethics to speak of the good man as one who approximates to a certain standard of goodness; but the important question would still remain unsettled. We have made no real progress until we know what constitutes the standard; to say that a thing is good when it agrees with a standard of goodness is no more than to say that a thing is good when it is good. It perhaps is also possible that there is such a thing as a typical human being, and that the good man is constituted such by exemplifying

this type; conformity to type may be in itself a good, and even, conceivably, the only good. But it is not self-evidently so, as is shown by the fact that when the proposition is put to us it immediately calls for proof. And it is in any case only an hypothesis about the nature of "what is good," and not a definition of the quality of goodness as such.

There is one further point of special importance for the ethical situation which comes out when we turn to the final set of cases. Just what is meant by the term "moral" is still of course to be determined. But at any rate this much appears to be involved, that any good deserving such a title is something that is *really* good, something that justifies itself as good under scrutiny, that has more than a merely transient or partial value, and that imposes on us, therefore, a certain obligation to pursue it. The distinction here is one which it will be found very necessary to keep in mind. There is no doubt that we are constantly being called upon to make a difference between things all of which we feel in a sense can be described by the adjective good, while yet some of them are not worth what they cost. An article of food or drink may "taste good," at the same time that we disapprove indulgence in it. This is an altogether different case, it will be noticed, from the one where we are wholly mistaken in our use of the term. I may think that something is good to the taste when it really turns out not to be palatable at all; I attribute to it, that is, a quality which I find it does not actually possess. But in the instance we are considering, this is not the fact. The quality in some sense *does* belong; the taste of the thing really *is* good; and except for other and complicating reasons I should not hesitate to enjoy it. And consequently we ought not to say, too literally, that we are mistaken in supposing it good, or

that it is good only in appearance. Rather, there are two shades of meaning involved, and it is really good in the first and simpler, but not in the second and more sophisticated sense.

It follows that if we are to clear up the meaning of the term, we must start with the more original and comprehensive usage. It is not wholly easy to do this. The word good has been so commonly appropriated for moral purposes that we are continually under a temptation to import this moral connotation where it does not really belong. But the very possibility of adding a descriptive adjective shows that a difference is involved; before a thing can be morally good it must already be good, just as before a man can be an educated negro he must be a negro. And it is evident that we may as a matter of fact call a thing good when no moral approval is involved. Even where the possibility of a moral life is lacking, as in the lower animals, or in very young children, we still look with indulgence upon their satisfactions, and do not hesitate to pronounce these better than painful experiences would be, or than experience not affectively toned at all. Art, again, while it may become a moral issue, is under no necessity of doing so; yet no one would refuse to admit that æsthetic pleasure is a good, though it may not carry with it any immediate "duty."

If, then, we look away from those uses of the word that attempt to give it a moral or an absolute standing, and take it in its comprehensive sense, is there any way to describe the meaning it conveys? When we examine the various things we are inclined to call good, can we discover some common characteristic which the use of the term involves, identifiable with their goodness?

The Analysis of Goodness.—The first point here to notice is, that goodness as such can be distinguished from

any particular character, capable of being described in terms other than goodness itself, which conceivably we may discover as belonging to an object in its own right. To begin with, if any such identity of meaning existed, it would be hard to understand how the great variety of opinion could ever have arisen about the content of the good. Suppose I take any specific property of things whatsoever, and try to identify this with their goodness—their pleasurableness perhaps, or their beauty, or their rationality, or their perfection; so that a bare recognition of its presence is a recognition that the object also is good. But now if the two words—pleasurableness, we will say, and goodness—are synonyms, no question could possibly arise in our minds about the truth of the judgment, "pleasure is the only good." The moment we realized what pleasure meant, we should see that also it constituted everything we mean by goodness, and the truth of the proposition would be self-evident. But as a matter of fact no proposition of this sort meets instant acceptance, and none has ever been proposed which commanded the assent of all philosophers. It is not at all impossible, indeed, that we may in the end find something common to all good things, whose presence is necessary to *make* them good. But if so, we can at best only justify this by an empirical discovery that nothing which is lacking in the quality does actually elicit the judgment of goodness, and not by the mere inspection of the quality itself; so far as this last is concerned, the same logical objection still holds. We may maintain with much assurance that pleasure is good, or even that it is the only good. But if pleasurableness signifies the same thing as goodness, one should be able to substitute it for the latter word. And then "pleasurableness is good" would mean no more than, "pleasurableness is pleasurable"; whereas the first state-

ment evidently intends to add something new and distinctive.

If we accept the conclusion of the preceding paragraph, there remain certain alternative possibilities. It is still conceivable that goodness may be an immediate quality of objects in their own right, *provided* we take it as a quality which is ultimate and unanalyzable, which has no need to look beyond itself for its definition, and concerning which, therefore, we can only say that "goodness is goodness." Historically this answer has been implied from time to time in intellectualistic theories of ethics; and in recent years it has shown a tendency to be received into favor, especially through the influence of Mr. G. E. Moore. And it possesses at least one apparent merit, in that it enables us to affirm without reservation the objective character of goodness, and its independence of private feelings and opinions. Nevertheless it has an undeniable look of paradox. I can understand well enough what is meant by an ultimate and unanalyzable quality. Sense qualities are such; when I am called upon to define the meaning of yellowness, for example, all I can say is that yellow is yellow. So again in the case of a relationship. I know what I mean by "difference"; it is just difference, and nothing more. But goodness, for the theory in question, is not held to be a relationship; it is analogous rather to a sense quality. And with Hume, I find it extremely perplexing to be called upon to allow a qualitative content for which there is in no sense that is intelligible to me an original impression; when I try to set the notion clearly before my mind, it appears to me very doubtful whether I am really thinking about anything in particular at all, and may not be only using words. If there is no other recourse it may seem best to waive this

doubt; but it suggests the desirability of trying another alternative first.

This second alternative is, that goodness is no specific quality inherent in an object, but the outcome of some distinctive *attitude* which we adopt toward such a quality. And this is the thesis which it is here proposed to defend. First however there is one possible interpretation it may bear—a very natural interpretation and one that is familiar in ethical theory—which will need to be set aside. This is the notion that the goodness of anything consists in the fact that it is an object of *desire*. The consideration of this new theory is complicated somewhat by reason of certain ambiguities to which it lends itself. There is a sense in which it seems difficult to deny that nothing does actually exist that is recognized as good by us which is not in some relation to desire. That which will satisfy desire or further interest—here we have something which as a matter of fact looks very much indeed as if it were common to all cases alike of goodness or of value. It has even been maintained at times that just this bare relationship which is involved in the fulfillment of interest is itself identically the meaning of value. This however is to confuse the two meanings of goodness which we started out by distinguishing; the relation of fulfillment is merely the instrumental conception of value again, and leaves the problem of intrinsic value still untouched. In point of fact it is clearly not desire itself, or the mere presence of biological response, that will provide a solution for this latter problem. In the biological sense satisfaction of desire may be, as indeed I think it is, the *cause* of goodness; it may represent the mechanism which makes the sense of value possible. But it is not normally the object, even, to which we apply the adjective good, much less

the felt *nature* of goodness itself. The mere recognition of a biological adjustment would leave me cold were it not for the *feeling* element which desire also presupposes; and this is something other than an act, or than a bare relationship.

And even when we turn from desire itself to its object again, the definition of goodness as *that which* satisfies desire has still to meet the same objection that was seen to be fatal in the case of pleasure; relation to desire does not, any more than relation to pleasure, constitute what we *mean* by goodness, even though it may be necessary to the production of goodness. We may say intelligibly that we want something *because* it is good, or, in another sense, that it is good because we want it; but the "because" which connects the two statements shows that we naturally suppose them to express a difference of meaning. And as a matter of fact it can hardly be questioned that the assertion, "what I desire is good," is intended to add something to the tautologous assertion, "what I desire is desired." So, again, we can hardly refuse to admit that desires are sometimes judged *not* to be good; and this would be difficult to understand, were goodness and relation to desire synonymous.

But now there is a second attitude which also we may adopt toward objects, and which possesses at the start a definite advantage over the attitude of desire, in that it takes account of a fact about the value judgment which the previous hypothesis tends to overlook. This is the fact that the assigning of goodness, or value, *is* primarily a *judgment*, an act of contemplative recognition, and not a practical attitude of wanting something or of aiming at it. And it is possible that this act of reflective contemplation may occur under conditions which add something to the purely intellectual perception of the object

and its inherent qualities. Let us accordingly turn back to the earlier situation from this new standpoint. It has appeared already that while things which we call good may have a quality in their own right on which judgment is pronounced, this quality cannot itself be made synonymous with goodness. The fact which *is* good—pleasure, or perfection, or anything you please—must first be known for what it is before we go on to speak of its goodness; whether or not pleasure is good, at any rate there can be no possible doubt that pleasure is pleasurable. But in order to bring in the word "good" it is not enough that we should merely *have* pleasure, or that we should judge pleasure to be the particular sort of thing it is. We need to go on and pass some *further* judgment about it. And this logical demand is verified when we turn to the actual facts of the value judgment. For when I pronounce the judgment about an object, This is good, I am not for the moment occupied merely with enjoying it. I am standing off and looking at it reflectively, in such a fashion that the quality which now engages my attention calls forth in me a secondary attitude of *intellectual favor or approval*, which issues in a new judgment with a peculiar character of its own.

The source of the recognition of goodness would thus appear to lie, not in any character which an object possesses in the original experience in which we come in contact with it, but in its ability to make a favorable impression in some subsequent thought about it. And if this is so, a determination of what is involved in "approval" will tell us what we mean by the goodness of anything, although of course we shall not as yet have made clear what kinds of things are good. To avoid misleading associations, attention should again be called here to the need of distinguishing two shades of meaning. Frequently

when we say that we approve of something, we mean that it calls forth our distinctively *moral* approval. Thus if I remark that, while approving the better, I nevertheless follow the worse, this is an instance of the use of the word with such a moral connotation. There is however, as in the case of goodness, a more primary sense that it may bear which does not presuppose any moral standard. In this simpler meaning, I "approve" whenever the idea of the thing attracts me, or in so far as my thought of it is pleasant. And it is in this broader sense alone that I am now using the term; I shall mean by approval a state of mind in which the thought of anything calls forth in me a feeling of pleasure.

The Definition of Goodness.—The object which gives rise to this reflective feeling, whatever it may be, I shall understand in so far possesses "goodness." I believe that a little consideration will show that this is what we do really mean by goodness. If a thing summons up in me, when I contemplate it in idea, no glow of pleasurable feeling, I shall have the greatest difficulty in understanding, or even tolerating, the claim that it is a "good" object, or that it has "value." And this will constitute therefore the first step in the analysis. A thing is recognized as possessing goodness, not in terms of some quality of the immediate experience in which it figures, but in so far as it is fitted to call forth in our mind the judgment of approval, or in so far as we contemplate or think of it with pleasure. Since the appreciation of value starts from a reflective situation and involves the recognition of an object, it is already an implicit judgment, in the sense in which any perceptual experience is a judgment. It differs from perception only through the fact that the object is now felt to have a new quality—a value quality—through the projection into it of a tang or flavor whose

source lies in the feeling by which the thought experience is accompanied. There is nothing peculiar or exceptional in this immediate and instinctive objectification of qualities that primarily are embedded in the experiencing itself. Thus color or taste, as they come home directly to awareness, are characters of sensation, which nevertheless are felt by us to be actual qualities of the object. A still nearer analogy is the closely related æsthetic experience, where it is very difficult not to suppose that a particular sort of feeling quality helps to constitute what we call the objective fact of "beauty."

The judgment "this is good," accordingly, is nothing but an explicit translation into words of such a "felt" judgment of value, as "this object is round" is the explicit formulation of what already is involved in perception. It may very well be, of course, that later reflection will reveal the need for revising in some degree our primitive understanding of the value concept, just as many people have come to believe that color is not really in the object, and that accordingly the "objectivity" of color ought only to mean the power of the object to produce color feeling in us. But if objective goodness actually, as might seem to be the case, turns into a relation between the object and our capacity to feel, this is still not what it *seems* to be in our first natural response to it; we do not primarily envisage it as a relation, but as a quality.

The statement, "pleasure is good," it thus appears, goes beyond the statement, "pleasure is pleasant," in that it adds to the quality of pleasantness recognized as the essence of the experience itself another fact, namely, that it arouses pleasant or approving thoughts. When I say that pleasure—or any other substitute that may be proposed—is good, I am not, in the first instance, to be

understood as meaning that pleasure is a *definition* of good, but that pleasure is a *case* of good. The further meaning will then be that, over and above its pleasantness, it is the object of a judgment of approval. We have no disposition to say in turn that the *approval* is good, in the sense in which we say that pleasure is good. We do not for the moment think of the approval or its pleasantness at all. What we think of as good is the original pleasantness, and we are able to do so only because we are in a certain attitude of mind to it which is not its own object but the object of a subsequent thought; and this last is not itself a case of value judgment, but one of plain matter of fact.

For a real definition, now, we must turn the sentence around, and make "good" its subject. Good will then be defined, not as some particular object of approval, or as our approval of it, but as *anything* we approve—the abstract character, that is, of calling forth approval. And in this way we escape, it seems to me, the logical objections that have been brought against other definitions of goodness. "Is this good?" Mr. Moore for example argues in defending the thesis that goodness is indefinable, "is a different state of mind from, 'Is this pleasant, or desired, or approved?'" Of the first two terms I have just been maintaining that this is true. "Is this good?" *is* a different state of mind from, "Is this pleasant or desired?" So in both cases, also, though I may hold that I should never make the judgment apart from such a quality in the object, it is not in every case that the presence of the quality calls forth the judgment; and this again gives point to the distinction between the two forms of question.

But I cannot feel that, as I have been defining the word, "approval" stands on the same footing. When I

ask what I *mean* by calling a thing good, other than this fact of its ability to constrain my approving judgment, I am unable to discover any answer. I may desire a thing and at the same moment refuse to call it good; but I do not see how I can *approve* a thing—find the *thought* of it agreeable—and at the same moment refuse to call it good. There is indeed still a possible meaning to the question, "Is this thing which I approve *really* good?" But it is a different meaning, and, I think, not a relevant one. The meaning is: On continued reflection and further experience shall I find it *retaining* my approval? But this only calls attention to the fact that my judgments of good, like my judgments of truth, are not infallible; they may need to be corrected. I could not correct them however if I did not know in terms of my present attitude of assent what good means. The very question implies that *so long as* I approve a thing, for me it is good; and if the name ever ceases to apply it will be because my attitude has changed.

It may be worth while repeating that when I declare that goodness is the quality of exciting approval, I do *not* intend to say that the meaning of good can be reduced to a particular fact of approval. Such a fact is a *condition* of goodness, but it is not its *content*. I cannot of course expect to define goodness except by glancing back at actual value judgments; and when I do this I discover, as I think, that they did involve approval. But in defining good in terms of approval I am not identifying it with a particular psychological feeling of approval; I am defining it through the abstract content I find in the approval situation. Once distinguish this abstract intellectual content from the psychological existence of a particular judging experience, and it appears to me that we can say, indeed are bound to say, that the general

notion of good cannot be separated from the notion of approval, though it can be distinguished from a particular case of approval, about which last I intend to pass no judgment at all. It is true that the definition does not reproduce the actual felt sense of value, which is always directed towards particulars. It is something which I discover by a later analysis, instead of its being present to the intellectual consciousness in the original act. But then no definition is ever identical with its object.

CHAPTER II

THE GOOD AND PLEASURE

Pleasure the Criterion of the Good.—The outcome of the preceding chapter has been that goodness is a quality which makes its appearance only in a secondary or reflective situation, and that it is dependent on a judgment of approval. This however leaves many questions still to be considered. What, we want in particular to know, is the sort of thing which is capable thus of calling forth our approval, and to which therefore the term goodness will apply? Again, *why* should we approve it, or think of it with pleasure? In order to find an answer to these and other queries we need to start upon a new stage in the analysis.

If we undertake to ask ourselves what is the content of that to which is applied the term good—not, it is to be kept in mind, absolute and final good, but the thing that has the root of goodness in it so as to deserve the title under certain circumstances at least and from some possible point of view—we are met first by the obvious fact that the things which on one occasion or another we call good are practically innumerable. Health, holidays, diamonds, fame, strawberries, virtue, courage, beauty, warmth and coolness, poetry and push-pin—the list might go on indefinitely. The only chance of answering the question therefore in a way to satisfy the philosophic instinct would be to discover some quality or qualities common to all the list. Is there any such quality to be detected?

The reply which in company with a very considerable

number of ethical theorists of the past and present I shall make to this, is one which I should find it impossible to prove according to the strict demands of logic. It depends wholly upon an appeal to our actual judgments of approval, and upon the claim that, when we examine these, we do find that the quality never is absent if the judgment is to be capable of standing up under scrutiny. One might deny if he wanted to that the connection is a necessary one; and there is no way that I can see to show conclusively that he might not be right about it. But he could be challenged to present a case in which the attribute was lacking; and if every case proposed could be shown to involve the quality on penalty of failing otherwise to call forth in us the reaction which we call the feeling of its goodness, the thesis would be established in the only way in which it is conceivable that it could be established.

The thesis itself is, that any sort of fact approved as good will be found to be of the sort that involves the feeling of pleasure or satisfaction in experience. I do not now mean that when we think of it we find pleasure in the *thought*, because this is what I have already identified with the feeling of approval itself. I mean that in its original presence also it is a pleasurable experience. I think with pleasure of the taste of an apple, and call it good, because the taste itself is pleasant. I reflect upon poetry and call it good because, prior to reflection, poetry gives me pleasure; and if it were not a source of pleasure it would no more seem good to me than a laundry list or a tailor's bill. Virtue itself it is inconceivable we should pronounce good were it not that the life of virtue is a life that brings satisfaction in its train; conceive the virtuous life as occasioning no slightest glow of feeling to oneself or others, directly or indirectly, and it becomes

impossible to convey any meaning into our words when we speak of its goodness.

The Psychology of Pleasure.—If it is so that the quality that justifies us in calling anything good, in this primitive and non-moralistic sense of the word, is its pleasurableness, or its satisfying character, pleasure evidently has a fundamental part to play in the theoretical understanding of the ethical situation; and it will be convenient before going further to attempt to clear up its proper theoretical status, as otherwise we are likely to fall into various confusions of thought. And first it is well to emphasize the fact that the thesis so far means just what it says and no more. Commonly in the history of ethical thought "hedonism" *has* meant something in addition. It has meant, not simply that pleasure is the particular quality that justifies us in calling a thing good, but that pleasure is the only end of action, the sole human motive, the one thing at which we aim and which induces us to put forth our effort. I have made no such claim as this. Indeed I consider the claim to be quite inadmissible, and contrary to obvious facts. Pleasure I have only held to be necessary if as reasonable beings we are to call a thing good, not if we are to act with reference to an end. And there are a variety of familiar facts which go to show that action does not have to wait upon a reflective recognition of its pleasurableness. For one thing—and this is decisive in itself—if it did depend upon this we should never get action started at all. If no one ate until he knew that food was pleasant, eating would soon become a lost art. Before we are aware that an experience is pleasant we must have had the experience; and the first time therefore, at any rate, something other than the expectation of pleasure must move us. The young chick pecks at a grain of corn because it cannot help

itself, not because it is a devotee of pleasure. After we have once enjoyed an experience the memory of the enjoyment is not without its effect upon our future action. But even if pleasure now enters into the situation, it is certainly not to the exclusion of the mechanism of instinct which started the act off in the first place. This still has to be there and play its part; and the mere fact that we have found eating pleasant in the past does not now induce us to repeat the act apart from present hunger, any more than the thought of the pleasure that as infants we took in a rattle now sends us to the toy shop.

We must set out from the fact then that the original source of action, or of conduct, is a complex interrelation of instinctive or impulsive tendencies which go to make up our concrete nature. And this carries with it a certain way of looking at the fact of pleasure from which ethical theory also will have to start. First, and beyond any manner of doubt, pleasure cannot be taken as the ultimate biological fact, but is somehow to be explained functionally —in its relation that is to the active process of behavior. And, though this is perhaps slightly more debatable, it seems also true that the relationship can in part be defined by calling pleasure a *sign* that the more ultimate end is being attained, an indication to me that I am really on the right road to the satisfaction of my needs. Following this clue then, and committing ourselves also to the common-sense belief that we as human beings are able to attain our ends more intelligently and successfully if we know wherein they consist, we are led tentatively to describe the feeling of pleasure as a sign that the demands of our nature are being met, which has a functional *value* likewise for the process of attainment, not only in the biological sense that somehow it seems to swell the flow of energy available for the act, but also in the—for

ethical purposes—more important, as well as more immediately verifiable sense, that it helps us in the conscious task of estimating reflectively the relative significance of competing ends and actions, and so puts us in the way of supplanting mere impulse with reasoned and intelligent conduct.

The Hedonistic Argument.—However, to leave the matter here would hardly be doing justice to the hedonistic argument. There is a rejoinder the hedonist may make, even while admitting all that has just been said. I grant, he might reply, that what we shall find pleasurable is in the end determined by organic needs and impulses, and so that, on a purely natural or animal basis, our deeds are ultimately traceable back to instinct as a predetermined tendency to action. But because this is usually the source and ground of behavior it does not follow that it is bound to be the *motive*, if by this we mean an end consciously selected because it appeals to us as *good*. Man differs from the animals just because he is not bound down mechanically to impulse. Of course he cannot break free from impulse in the sense that he can arbitrarily make a thing seem pleasurable to him for which he has no constitutional bent. But among the impulses, all of them his, which stand for possible lines of action, he can give his conscious preference to certain in particular on the basis of their recognized goodness; and this "goodness" is a *feeling* rather than a physical or biological fact. Indeed the preceding analysis admits this. So long as pleasure is interpreted in purely biological terms as an intensification—or any other qualification you please—of the organic process of directed energy, it is to be sure, by definition, no more than a subordinate aspect of an end describable wholly in objective language. But when it becomes a *conscious sign*, capable of being

utilized by intelligence, it takes on a different status. As intelligent and ethical beings then, it is goodness, not biological adjustment, at which we aim. No matter what it is that causally determines the particular thing we shall call good, what we really hold before the mind in reflective choice is just the good itself; and if what is good is describable in terms of pleasure, then it is pleasure after all that constitutes conscious motive and end.

So interpreted, accordingly, the hedonistic thesis is, not that pleasure is the only goal which we can conceive ourselves predisposed to attain—for we have sufficiently seen that we are adapted biologically to the attainment of ends quite independent of the feeling of pleasure—but that it is the only fact which a reasonable human being can set before himself as a *desirable* end, really worth the trouble of attaining. A man might find himself pushed by unconscious forces to a goal from which he withheld his approval. Thus a perfectly sincere pessimist might, by the pure "will to exist," be held to a life which he reflectively condemned; as a matter of fact very few pessimists commit suicide. But this would offer no difficulty to the hedonist provided he elected to maintain, not that pleasure is the only end of action, but that it is the only end with which we consciously identify ourselves, and intentionally and with self-approval pursue.

Nevertheless it still is possible to raise the question whether this really means after all that pleasure constitutes the only motive for action, even as a conscious and "rational" motive. And to sharpen the issue, it is first necessary to decide what we are going to mean by the word "motive." The simplest thing would be to suppose that we refer to nothing more than the particular idea or object present to the mind before we act, in so far as this is something that attracts us and draws us on. But

if we mean this, we are clearly not entitled to say that pleasure is the only possible motive. While we *may* hold before ourselves some future pleasure explicitly as the object of our efforts, it is not at all necessary that we should do so. Indeed we do it relatively seldom. For the most part I am not thinking of my feelings, but of the acts I am going to perform, the things I am going to get, the results I am going to accomplish. We expect a man, setting out on a business career, to take keen pleasure in the thought of building up a large enterprise, making money, acquiring power and reputation among his associates. But these are all objective facts, not feelings; and certainly we should think less highly of him if all the time his mind were filled instead with the pleasures that money will buy, or with anticipations of the pleasurable emotions—pride and complacency—attending upon success. I do not at present ask why this is so. But that for the most part we are aware, in healthy motivation, of the objects that possess goodness—or that produce pleasure—and not of the bare pleasures themselves, seems a clear fact of experience; and this would hardly have the effect it normally does upon our sense of ethical approval, unless the difference were something more than just a verbal one.

But the hedonist will not be content to stop with this. Granted, he will say, that an idea which stands for a motive in the mind may be of various sorts, the further question is, *Why* does it stand thus, and what is the source of the attraction or compulsion which it exercises? And if we attempt to answer *this* question, it will appear to him that we are brought back again from a multiplicity of motives to the one aspect of them all—pleasure—that really exerts motive power.

The Answer to Hedonism.—Here lies unquestionably

the strong point in the hedonistic contention; and it cannot be entirely set aside without abandoning the thesis that pleasurable quality is the source of the judgment of goodness. Nevertheless it needs to be stated very carefully if we are not to do injustice to the facts. And an accurate statement will scarcely be in terms of pleasure as the "motive." At least this would make it necessary to change our definition of a motive, and to think of it, not as the thing we naturally fix upon as attractive to us, but as the *reason why* this thing is chosen rather than something else. We have already seen, however, that this cannot intend to ask for the ultimate reason why the thing is pleasurable. The moment we ask this, we are directed back of feeling altogether to that basic fact of impulse, lying below the level of the conscious life, on which feeling and action alike depend. And if we try to give the question any other meaning, we are likely to discover that it is at the risk of confusing again two different situations which it has already been found necessary to distinguish.

The distinction is that between the case of action on the one hand, and of the intellectual process of judging the relative goodness of ends on the other. Primarily a motive is a motive for action; and in the active situation we do not, as even the hedonist will admit, ordinarily think about pleasures at all, but about things, acts, ways and means, consequences. A large share of our lives is passed simply in doing things, more or less pleasant, under circumstances where our ends are already taken for granted; and here at any rate the thoughts that motivate or set off the act are on their face objective terms. But this is not the situation which the hedonist really has in mind when he claims that we always aim at pleasure. If it is suggested to him that things, not pleasures, are com-

monly before the mind when we act, what indeed he replies is, Well, I grant that we *seem* to be thinking about objects, but the *real* motive after all is the pleasure, as we discover when we stop to think, and ask ourselves how we are to justify our conduct to reflection. In other words, pleasure appears as the motive not when we are acting, but when we "stop to think."

But the act of reflection upon our ends and of coming to a decision about their goodness is a case quite distinguishable from the presence of motivation in the actual conduct of life. In the former case we *are* indeed thinking about pleasures; but why? It is not that they stand as a direct motivation to action. We are not now engaged in doing, but in thinking; we are trying to solve the intellectual problem, What really is the good? And we go about this by bringing before the mind, not the *motive* for action—for as every act alike has its motive this would leave all on exactly the same plane—but the *test* by which a good end is distinguished from those that do not evoke the judgment of approval. And since pleasure is the test or sign of goodness, when we are engaged in an intellectual inquiry to discover to what things goodness really attaches, we of course have to think explicitly about their pleasurableness, or their satisfying character, as the only means of separating true from false claimants. This pleasure, as the thing consciously before the mind, may now in an intelligible sense be called the "reason why" the end is judged good by us. But all we mean is that it identifies the particular quality which the mind picks out as justifying approval in point of fact; it neither constitutes the original motive in consciousness for doing the act, nor does it supplant the need for a more ultimate and objectively causal explanation of *why* the quality gives rise to approval.

It might still be asked why, if pleasurable quality is in a proper sense the motive of my *choice*—if it is what I consciously direct my attention to, that is, when I am engaged in judgments of preference—I should not continue to call it the motive of my *act*, since I always choose with reference to a resulting action, and upon the result of my choice the act depends. And there perhaps is no compelling reason, apart from a desire for precision in language. It seems difficult to deny that, in a sense, when I act in view of an end which I recognize as desirable, this character of desirableness is a peculiarly important ingredient of my state of mind; and popularly there may be no objection to speaking of it as my "motive." But for purposes of theoretical analysis this will be found to involve us everywhere in difficulties. Accordingly it will be safer if we are careful to keep in mind that the pleasure which makes one end seem desirable rather than another presupposes the presence already of concrete objects related to human desire or impulse, and if we reserve the term "motive" therefore for this total object which has its connection with action rather than with choice, and which possesses pleasurableness as a quality instead of being itself no more than pleasant feeling.

The same result emerges if we approach an anlysis of the situation from a slightly different angle. One reason will appear for the subtlety of the distinctions we have had to draw here, when we note that there are three quite separate forms of pleasure implicated, with no very clear-cut differences of terminology to mark them off. There is the pleasure which an act has given us in the past, the pleasure we expect to get in the future, and the present pleasure we enjoy while we think of this in anticipation. And all of these play rôles of their own in connection with the ethical judgment, which it is extremely easy to con-

fuse. It is the past pleasure which the traditional hedonist has in the first instance in view. This is what the reflective theorist, engaged not in the active practice of the ethical life but in examining the nature of his concepts, is pretty sure to turn his attention to in his search for the content of the good; I know a thing to be good, and can approve my judgment to others, in so far as, looking back upon our common experience, I am able to point to the verifying presence of an attendant feeling of satisfaction. It is in this academic analysis of the past that pleasure gets marked off most definitely from its source and conditions, and tends to engage the mind in its own right.

Such past pleasure is, however, not itself a motive. When we talk about pleasure as a motive, in the sense in which the term has been defined, it must be a future pleasure that we have in view; for it is only something still to come that can furnish an incentive to action. But when pleasure thus becomes, not the mere object of an impersonal analysis, but an actual element in conduct, it no longer stands by itself, normally, as a disembodied quality. That which has a personal appeal for me is not *mere* pleasure, of any and every sort, but the specific objects and activities that satisfy my concrete nature. And because these have to be presupposed before I can get pleasure, I cannot envisage pleasure by itself and still find it exerting its appeal.

Meanwhile in saying that a thing really moves us only as it is an object of actual desire and appreciation, we are pointed also to the third form of pleasure—the present pleasure of the thought. This however is not the motive to action, but the content of approval, or of the intellectual recognition of goodness. It may connect itself indeed with one other possible way of defining "mo-

tive"—as the actual causal force that moves to action. And it is often useful to take it in this way, and to say that anger, or love, or jealousy, with its hedonic reinforcement, is the motive to an act. But this at any rate is to turn aside from the peculiar claims of hedonism. And since this actual motive force is a biological fact, underlying the conscious life, it can in general be of little use for ethics, however essential psychology may find it. For the ethicist, we are brought back again to the conception of a motive as an objective ideal content which, through its connection with impulse, represents to consciousness an end of action.

The Source of the Feeling of Approval.—It is time now to pay some attention to a second question which so far has been left unconsidered. If that is good which gives pleasure when we think of it, *why* is this thought found pleasurable? What is the cause of the approval that constitutes goodness? The act gives pleasure, we have roughly assumed, because it calls into exercise some impulse or capacity of human nature; but why should the *contemplation* of what is pleasurable give pleasure also?

To such a question, the simplest and most obvious answer seems a sufficient one. If we are already attracted toward an object in the sense that we feel the impulse to secure it as a means of satisfying some desire, the pleasure of approval would be a sign of the same attractive desire in an intellectual or anticipatory setting. Approval, it needs once more to be noted, is not identical empirically with desire. Desire also involves an anticipating thought of the object, and may be attended by pleasure, though it may equally be painful if the object of desire is too far out of reach; and desire, accordingly, will usually embody an inarticulate sense of the object's goodness. This is the source of the common confusion

between approval and desire. But desire is more than approval. It is an *active* experience also, in which we already feel ourselves urged forward toward attainment. And we find no difficulty in distinguishing it, even if we cannot entirely separate it, from the contemplative judgment of an object's goodness which stops short with an intellectual pronouncement about it; to want a thing, and to declare it worth wanting, are not identical experiences. But it is also a natural assumption that the inner glow of feeling which makes the difference between a genuine and first-hand sense of value and a judgment of fact *merely* intellectual in its nature, is due to the presence of incipient desire such as the object thought of would actually satisfy.

And this suggests the need of giving somewhat greater precision to the previous thesis that pleasure is the quality which renders an object good. If, the reader may perhaps have asked himself, the sense of value is reducible to pleasure in contemplation due to the presence of desire, and if it is granted, both that a past pleasure does not as such arouse any feeling at all, and that future pleasure does not need to be explicitly a part of the object which calls forth the sense of goodness, what becomes of the claim that pleasure is the essential character of the good? Does it not seem to follow that something other than pleasure may have goodness, since it can elicit "approval"?

I have not however anywhere been intending to assert that the *recognition* of pleasure is necessary to call forth the judgment of goodness. The thesis has been, rather, that only when we can point to pleasure is the judgment of value felt to be *justified.* It is obviously quite possible that I may have a value judgment which turns out to be mistaken; what I thought to be good is not really good. And pleasure is necessary as a quality of the good only

in the sense that it alone serves to distinguish true judgments from mistaken ones. I look forward, we will say, with pleasurable anticipations to an outing, my mind very likely dwelling upon purely objective circumstances; and I am in a position, in consequence, to pass a value judgment. But I recognize, if I stop to think, the tentative character of this judgment; and if the day should happen to go wrong and end in disappointment, I should have to say that it had turned out *not* to be good after all. The judgment, in other words, always needs to be verified; and it *is* verified, not by the mere physical act that expresses desire, but by the sense of satisfaction which accompanies the act, and which continues and completes the incipient or prophetic pleasure already present in the thought. And having once discovered the need for such a verification through experience, we thereafter use pleasure as the necessary intellectual criterion of the presence of goodness; though in using it we seldom *feel* toward the fact of pleasure by itself the actual sense of goodness that attaches to desired objects, and we do feel value in many things where pleasure is for the moment not a part of the intellectual content consciously before the mind.

Æsthetic Pleasure and Approval.—It would perhaps be sufficient to leave the matter here, if it were not for one other fact which offers a certain complication. This is the fact that, describable also in terms of "contemplation," and equally divorced from the immediate experience of desire and action, we find a more instinctive and emotional form of pleasurable experience of a peculiar kind—the so-called æsthetic pleasure. And it might seem an alluring theory therefore if we were to try to identify the feeling tone distinctive of approval with that special pleasure which belongs to the contemplative attitude in

the perception of beauty—to reduce, in other words, the ethical judgment to the æsthetic.

It seems very probable that in the complex to which we assign the convenient name conscience, æsthetic feeling plays a not unimportant part. The positive and attractive content of moral good would commonly be recognized as at least a semi-æsthetic object; and almost always moral theorists—of the Greek or pagan school—who emphasize this positive content have shown a disposition to emphasize also the community of the good with beauty. And not only has the moral object an æsthetic character, but the motive power it exerts may be due, at times, just to its æsthetic attractiveness, and not to a prior impulse to attain it; the desire follows, rather than in any obvious way precedes, the admiration. For a certain type of mind it may even be that ethical ideals are principally determined by the consciously æsthetic effects of the "beautiful life"; such for example is the later philosophy of Oscar Wilde.

But granting this, it still seems impossible to accept the reduction of the moral judgment to the æsthetic. After all, immediate "æsthetic" approval, as a sense of beauty or sublimity, is not identical with the judgment that its object is "good." Beauty is not the same as goodness; it is *a* good. We have to stand off and reflect upon it before we call it good; and we call it good precisely because æsthetic contemplation is itself *pleasurable.* More generally, we need to recognize that the immediate instinctive reaction of human nature to objects in emotional terms, though it may sometimes be connected with contemplation in the presence of the object rather than with active conduct, is not yet a judgment of goodness, or what we are talking of as approval; the reflection

which gives rise to the concept of goodness is not an immediate emotional experience, but a subsequent intellectual one. The direct emotional judgments which experience evokes are an exceedingly important part of its subject matter. Not only do they, as notably in the case of beauty, give rise to values which are new in kind, but also they may be the means of revealing the presence in us of active desires of which we hitherto have been unaware. Thus the man who has felt in himself no call to lead the heroic life may find his judgment affected by the thrill of admiration, and so be induced to cultivate qualities for which naturally he has no strong personal relish. But theoretically all such experiences still remain different from, and more ultimate than, the judgment of goodness. It seems more reasonable therefore to interpret the æsthetic quality which the good indubitably may possess as a result rather than a cause. We can quite well admit that goodness has characteristics which make it one of the objects capable of arousing æsthetic appreciation, without going on to claim that this æsthetic quality constitutes its nature as goodness; this is no more true than that the beauty of the religious life constitutes religion.

Meanwhile there is one term I have had occasion once or twice to use which deserves a further word, since it will play a part in the subsequent analysis. The particular form of emotional reaction which we are most likely to confuse with intellectual "approval" is not the feeling of beauty in its narrower sense, but the feeling of *admiration;* to admire a thing, and to call it good, it may perhaps seem at first view a little arbitrary to discriminate. But closer attention will, I think, both justify the distinction, and show why the confusion is likely to arise.

Admiration is, as such, an immediate emotional response —an emotion belonging to the general class of the

æsthetic, which differs from the feeling of sensuous beauty not so much in its essence as in the nature of the object which calls it forth. And the important difference seems to be this, that admiration is elicited, not by a sensuous object, but by a quality intellectually recognized in an object; more specifically, we admire only what displays some character independently judged by us to be *good*, when this is present in an indeterminate, but at any rate an unusual degree. Thus to feel the beauty of a picture, and to admire a picture, are both describable as æsthetic experiences; but they are nevertheless not identical experiences. For when I admire the picture I am regarding it as revealing, in notable measure, a certain quality in the *maker* of the picture, namely, artistic skill. Such a connection with human capacity, in some more or less direct way, is indeed apparently a requisite in qualities that are to call forth admiration in the strict sense; when I "admire" works of nature, I always find myself, I think, personifying the situation, and vaguely regarding it as the output of a quasi-human power. Meanwhile—and this is all that bears directly on the present argument—the quality of skill, or power, or whatever it may be, must at any rate be conceived as a "good" before admiration is aroused. And consequently it is understandable that we should tend to confuse admirableness and goodness, since the former never occurs without the latter; while yet the feeling of admiration, as a secondary emotional result of this recognition under assignable conditions, makes it in itself quite other than "approval."

Summary.—Before proceeding, it may be well to restate the whole situation in its larger aspects. The one fundamental fact of ethics is, to begin with, the fact of life itself, as a complex of active processes growing out of native disposition. Certain conditions attending this self-

expression—conditions which there are reasons for describing roughly in terms of a freely-moving and successful carrying out of impulse—give rise to the new fact of pleasurable feeling tone. And at the descriptive level of animal behavior we perhaps could stop here. Behavior, however, is not all we mean by *human* life. We do not simply act upon ends. We present ends consciously to our minds, choose and reject among them, look into the future, and try to gain some large and comprehensive guidance.

And we are able to do this intelligently and to good purpose, because we have a sign or indication that we are heading the right way in the fact of pleasure, or the feeling of satisfaction. If the selection of our ends is no longer to be trusted to an automatic mechanism, and they are to be put under the control of intelligence instead, there must be *some* way in which intelligence shall recognize its own. The "scientific" working of the intellect, in the way of perceiving facts, events, and relationships, and drawing proper inferences from them, is not enough here. If the end which the organism sets and which constitutes living were a simple and unambiguous one—the preservation of life, say, at all hazards against the chances and accidents of the environment—intellect indeed would not need to go beyond its familiar utilitarian and scientific exercise. All that would be called for would be a careful and impartial survey of the situation in order to discover the means appropriate to an end previously settled and defined. But as a matter of fact the case is otherwise. The end is not a single and preëstablished one, to which we are pushed from behind inevitably by unconscious forces. Our most difficult task is to decide what in any comprehensive way the end of life really is, and to settle accounts between a host of competing claimants. And for this task we

need an intellectual tool different from the purely scientific intellect which deals with qualities and connections of things all on the same level of existence. We have to have a means of estimating ends themselves. And such a tool we possess in the perception of *values*. A value, I have held, is definable as any thing that excites in us, *in reflection*, a feeling of pleasure. And nothing has this power except as it is also productive in itself of pleasure; the only reason we can give to account for its attractiveness to the mind—its value nature—is that it stands in such a relation to our active nature that satisfaction is its natural accompaniment.

But it does not follow that pleasure ought to be called our only *motive*. On the contrary, "motive" has no clear meaning except as it stands for that which, held before the mind, through its attraction for us leads to action; and many things besides pleasure fit this definition. They all have pleasure capacity connected with them. But because a thing will not work without a certain quality, it does not need to be the quality alone that does the work. Coal does not warm us except as it is hot; but it is much more natural to say that we heat our houses by means of coal than by means of hotness. After all the question is not one of theory but of fact; and the fact is, beyond any manner of doubt, that the thought of many other things induces us to act besides the thought of future pleasure. Indeed the more we try to whittle down the motive to the bare feeling of pleasantness, and to exclude the concrete circumstances in connection with which the pleasure occurs, the less attractive is the idea certain to become. I see for example a picture that I want to buy. Clearly it is the thought of the actual picture with all its concrete beauty that induces me to purchase it, and not a mere anticipation of my pleased state of mind

when it shall hang upon my walls; for unless I held the picture itself before me I should anticipate no pleasure. So, again, the more we separate pleasures from the actual occasions of their appearance, the more desperate becomes the task of estimating and comparing them. All pleasures in the abstract look alike; we can tell whether we prefer one thing to another only as we bring before ourselves as fully as possible the entire situation out of which the pleasure arises.

The theory I am adopting, then, is not properly to be called hedonism in the historical sense, for it does not say that we *aim* only at pleasure. There is no need of meaning this, since "good" I take to be the content of a secondary and reflective judgment. This leaves it to be settled entirely without prejudice at what we do actually aim; it only says that no aim will be called reflectively a *good* aim unless it tends to result in pleasure. Nor do I intend to say that mere pleasurableness by itself is good. Pleasantness as such is not good because pleasantness does not exist by itself; a good is concrete, and pleasantness merely an abstract quality.

Why All Pleasures Are Not Adjudged Good.—Now also we need to take a further step, and note that while nothing is called good which is not connected with pleasure, not every pleasure by any means is called good; at least it is not called good in the sense in which ethics is chiefly interested in the term. If there is any apparent contradiction in this statement, it is due to overlooking certain simple considerations. And as a first preliminary, we need to note two quite distinct intellectual attitudes which we may on different occasions adopt. A child takes pleasure in playing with its blocks; is this a case of the good, or not? Evidently it is a good for the child. So also for me, watching the child, it is a good in the sense

that I can, by putting myself in his place, recognize the appropriateness of the descriptive adjective. But it probably is not my good in the further sense that it enters into my own reflective end or scheme of life. We have, in other words, to keep separate the point of view of the observer who is interested in noting the conditions under which an object may for *any* one, and under any circumstances, be recognized as good, and that of the active agent who wants for practical reasons to draw up an account of the good end for *him*, as an individual or a member of the human race.

And from this last formulation many pleasures will be excluded that might, were the practical interest disregarded, be talked about by the disinterested spectator as cases of the good. We should, to begin with, exclude those pleasures of the lower animals, or of degenerate human beings, which fail to have an attraction for the normal human mind, though intellectually we may see reason to believe that they represent, to a differently constituted nervous organism, the same affective thrill that renders other things good for us. Consider for example Mill's famous saying, It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. One can readily imagine the life of a well-cared-for healthy pig to be in the abstract an enviable one; granted that his nervous system is sufficiently delicate to make his pleasures genuinely pleasant to him, it perhaps comes as near being one continuous round of enjoyment, unhampered by mental or spiritual worries, as it is easy to conceive. But it is doubtful whether the unhappiest of human beings ever genuinely desired to escape his troubles by such a path. Men are not constituted like pigs, and therefore they cannot genuinely wish themselves in the place of pigs. If they really *were* pigs they might actually have a pleas-

anter time of it; but that would suppose them already different from what they are. In asking them to decide whether they want a pig's happiness, it is assumed, on the contrary, that the motives on which they judge are the motives of their actual present nature. And if this happiness does not awake in them a responsive chord, but, rather, a sense of degradation and disgust, they cannot really wish themselves enjoying it. In a general way they want happiness; and if they do not stop to analyze it may seem to them that any happiness will do. But when they come to specify they discover that what they want is their *own kind* of happiness, not that of some other being; the happiness they really crave is the particular brand that meets their organic needs, and not pleasure in general.

For ethics, then, we may set aside the attitude which ignores the special interest man has in finding what is happiness for *him*. As ethicists we are concerned with *human* good. We are interested not in scientific or psychological conditions of pleasure in general, but in discovering what things in the concrete give pleasure to this particular sort of being—man. But now we come to a second limitation, which is closer to the real subject-matter of ethics; from the notion of the good one will find it necessary to exclude many things that even he himself finds pleasurable. Some of the pleasures of eating, for example, we are likely to decline to call in our enlightened judgment good. It is important to note again just what we mean by this. It is not as if we were wholly mistaken in our application of the term. In some sense the word good still seems to fit. And if in another sense we deny that the pleasure of eating is good, all we intend to say, so far, is that its goodness *per se* is outweighed in our minds by other and concomitant ills—indigestion and

the like—to which it gives rise. It is not good *on the whole*. In itself it still gives pleasure, and pleasure is a good. But the reflective judgment on which the recognition of goodness depends is influenced also by a variety of other considerations; and these prevent in the present instance the judgment from being pronounced wholeheartedly and without qualification. If goodness were identical with pleasure this might occasion a difficulty, since the pleasure admittedly is actual. But there is nothing to prevent a thing, pleasant in itself, from failing to arouse pleasure in our thought of it, if it forms part of a larger situation to which the feeling tone of the reflective thought is due; though abstractly it is still good in the sense that, were the complicating circumstances absent, it is the sort of thing that normally would produce the value judgment.

The natural way of putting this is to say that ethics aims to tell us what is *really* our good, in the face of our constant temptation to take some transient and inconsequential pleasure as if it could stand the test of our more reasonable moods. It is the permanent good, the good on the whole and in the long run, that we are after; and this renders it impossible to stop with the mere fact that something gives us pleasure. Pleasures have to be judged before we can grant them any settled right to the title of *my* good, or *human* good. In a superficial way I can still say I want the thing that gives me this transient pleasure; and in so far as I want it, and nothing else prevents, I am bound to *think* of it with pleasure and approval. But in my sober moods I know that I really do not want it as badly as I may incline at times to suppose I do; what I want more is the larger satisfaction that does not stop with the moment, or with a single appetite or interest. This would not of course be pos-

sible were I merely a creature of impulse. If each appetite as it arose claimed the whole field till it was satisfied, giving place then to the next, one pleasure would be just as good as another. But it requires no proof that this is not the sort of creature a human being is. He is a being with intelligence as well as appetite, who aims at some manner of reasonable adjustment among the impulses that lie alongside one another in his make-up; he is capable of conceiving his life, not as just one thing after another, but in relation to more permanent interests that tie his daily activities together. We are not now talking of what he *ought* to be. He *is* this as a plain matter of fact, in greater or less degree.

It is this which accounts for the ethical superiority of the judgment of approval over mere desire so that it is able to rank desires in their order of value, even though the pleasure which constitutes the sense of approval rests itself psychologically on the basic fact of impulse. It is just the advantage of being a reflective judgment, not bound down to the exigencies of the moment, or dependent on the temporary state of the organism. Its possibilities are the possibilities of our more impartial and reasonable nature. This presupposes only two things. It assumes the empirical unity of the self, in the sense that we are as a matter of fact in some measure constituted in a way to make possible an organization or harmony of the springs of desire, so that a successful life consists in integrating the ends of conduct instead of leaving them a mass of conflicting impulses. And, secondly, it assumes the power which we have through reason of *anticipating* this harmony in the ideal realm, by thinking the scattered ends of our life together, and, through an anticipatory judgment of what is likely to be their final and permanent appeal, getting a tool for coercing the tyranny of their

temporary and merely organic insistence. I desire some pleasure of sense; and if I could keep my mind solely on the one desire and its attendant pleasure I should unhesitatingly pronounce it good. But this is just what the mind refuses to do. Its very nature is to spread; it can no more be confined to the simple field of present intensified desire, except as the desire is so abnormally strong as temporarily to inhibit the exercise of reason, than water will confine itself to circumscribed limits on a level surface.

It may be well to make sure, again, that we are not getting ahead faster than the argument allows. I have assumed so far no more than this, that man is a creature who is engaged primarily in the endeavor to satisfy his desires. As yet the only point has been that it is our main business in life to get what we want, under the proviso that we take care not to judge the content of desire unintelligently, and so sacrifice what we *really* want for something we shall afterwards regret. It is not so much a question of not being immoral, as it is a question of not being a fool. We have had no reason as yet to say that this transient and undesirable pleasure is wrong or sinful; it is wrong only in the sense that it is the wrong *means* to adopt *if* we want the greatest satisfaction on the whole. The entire matter is simply one of calculation, or expediency. If I could see a chance to slip the pleasure in without too great a loss I should do it. But if there appears no way to manage this, I try to be a good sport and go without, though I do not make the mistake of denying that I have thereby lost a certain element of good. The pleasure itself is not bad; it is only bad *for me.* But being bad for me, I do not in its context stand ready to approve it; and therefore, though it is a pleasure, it is not a good.

Quantity of Pleasure and the Good.—And now the

recognition that, for anyone who is not a fool, the good of life is something which is good on the whole, and not pleasure of any sort irrespective of its content, suggests one further and important qualification to the thesis that pleasure is what constitutes a thing good. As the present theory does not imply that every pleasure must necessarily be a part of the concrete good for me, so neither does it imply that my good is measured by the greatest quantity or intensity of pleasure. We have to postulate—because we find it so—that man is a being unified enough to be capable of pleasure "on the whole"; but what pleasure on the whole means has to be settled by the evidence. It is of course conceivable that it *might* have been found in the choice of the most intense pleasures, or of the greatest sum of pleasures. But the fact seems to be that normally it is not so found. There is a meaning, difficult to define but open to introspective testing, in such words as "total satisfaction" or "contentment"—something which we feel involves the harmonious reaction of our natures in a way that distinguishes it from the mere sum of individual pleasures we may enjoy. For a sum of pleasures is a compound which does not exist as a whole at any single moment; whereas "satisfaction" is itself an individual and unitary state of feeling, with a character of its own that is easily identified when actually it comes into being. Satisfaction is a feeling state of enjoyment. But I can enjoy without in the least feeling satisfied; I may even experience a strong disgust at my pleasure at the very moment it is pleasant to me. Far from being a mere sum, contentment has apparently not a quantitative nature at all. I can say that the pleasure my dinner gives me is greater or less in amount or intensity; the pleasure of eating is always there, but there is more of it at one time than another. But when I say that I am

more or less satisfied, the meaning seems to be a different one. There is no maximum which is identified with *the* pleasure of taste; but to be "content" is a perfectly definite state of consciousness, which I either have or I do not. When I say therefore that I am more or less content, what I mean is that I am nearer to contentment, or further from it, as the case may be.

Accordingly when I come to deliberate and choose a line of action, what goes on in me, if I can trust my own introspection, is something like this: Primarily I project myself in imagination first in one alternative situation and then the other, try to live out the thing, get the feel of it, soak up the resultant satisfactoriness as a whole by anticipation. Incidentally, however, this will often involve setting off pleasure against pleasure or pleasure against pain, particularly in so far as we are dependent on a recollection of past pleasures the force of whose present appeal is fluctuating and doubtful. I may know intellectually the goodness of some object more accurately than if I trusted my present feeling of its goodness at the moment of deliberation—for example, in the ordering of a dinner at a time when in the absence of hunger the thought of food makes no special immediate appeal; and then I probably find myself estimating roughly the intensity of past feelings. This is more apt to be the case with relatively minor and disconnected pleasures than with our more significant and permanent aims; though these last, too, are not independent of our moods, and even a very fundamental interest may for the time being seem dull and tasteless, and quite lacking in the weight our intellectual judgment, drawing on the memory of past satisfactions, is aware it ought to be assigned. And in so far as such data refuse to enter into an immediate unity of anticipated experience, there is no way of dealing with them

except in a spirit of numerical or quasi-numerical calculation.

The method is rough and precarious, being open to all the defects that result from the unreliability of memory, the very considerable chance that the same object will not appeal to me again just as it did before, and the extreme vagueness of the quantitative data. These data are indeed not altogether unworkable when we simplify the situation sufficiently. While it is doubtful whether any clear idea attaches to the sum of several pleasures, we can compare individual pains and pleasures with a measure of exactness. Thus if there are two pleasures of a known and standard value belonging to the rival situations which I feel to be approximately equal in intensity, I can pair them off and exclude them from the reckoning. Or, again, any considerable hedonic advantage which an element in one situation has over some corresponding element in the other can be used to weight the former, until it is offset by something else. But such explicit calculations nevertheless are likely to have a much more subordinate place in proportion as we pass from relatively unimportant ends to larger and weightier issues; here they seldom play other than a preliminary rôle, and are recognized as useful for simplifying the problem and making it more manageable, rather than as solving it. The final decision is of a far less mechanical nature, and consists, again, in the attempt to realize the immediate inwardness of the act as a whole. Indeed this is necessary even, since the method of calculation presupposes conditions which are seldom present in a complex situation. How pleasurable a thing will turn out to be is often at the start entirely unsettled; only in the light of the whole does the relative worth of many of the elements first become determinate.

The essential business of the ethical or rational life is, then, to compare ends, or courses of conduct, as wholes. This does not exclude the special desires and their pleasurableness; there can be no whole without parts, and the desires *are* the parts. But in coming into relation to a larger situation they tend to lose their sharply separate character. Thus the pleasure of a good dinner becomes noticeably less alluring if I have to eat it with the thought in my head that I am to make a speech afterwards. The appeal pleasures make is modified by an appraisal of the way they look to an intelligent and sensible being who sees around them, and notes their less immediate characters and their consequences. And whereas in comparing single desires or pleasures it is by their relative *intensity* that we decide which it is we want, intensity is something which does not seem to belong to totalities. Rather, here, it is the new quality of "satisfactoriness"—a quality which involves a reference not to one desire taken singly but to desire in its relationships and context—that decides between competing goals. An intense *life* is simply a life characterized by a rush and vividness of interests, and may or may not be "satisfying."

As for quantity of pleasure in any precise numerical sense, this is left an almost negligible place in our ethical judgments. Two pleasures, even when they are dissimilar in kind, may be compared vaguely in respect of their intensity; but intensity does not lend itself to exact quantitative treatment. Except in the unimportant sense that *a* and *b* together are quantitatively greater than either would be alone—which would seem to follow so long as two is greater than one—we can "add" pleasures only in case we are dealing with identical units. Thus I see no definite meaning to the claim that I get double the amount of pleasure out of a game of tennis that I do out of a

good dinner; though I might get *more* pleasure out of both than out of either singly, and I *might* get twice as much pleasure out of two games of tennis as out of one. Within narrow limits we may thus apply the quantitative test; other things being equal, I shall secure a determinately less amount of enjoyment out of a day's vacation than out of a week's. But then other things are seldom equal; and if I am likely to be bored before the week is over, I need to fall back on something different from quantitative addition. In practice the only clear meaning therefore that a "sum of pleasure" carries is this, that I want my life to be a continuous series of satisfied moments lasting as long as possible. But this is pretty much an empty platitude, which throws almost no light at all on what constitutes satisfaction at any given moment.

The Good as Satisfaction.—There is then, we may assume, a kind of life which, in view of the sort of person I am, the nature and relative strength of my interests and capacities, my disposition to like or dislike things, the clearness and sensitiveness of my intellectual judgments, will actually come nearest to making me a satisfied man. Contentment is of course not intended here to suggest passivity, or the sort of acquiescence in present attainment that implies a refusal to exercise intelligent self-criticism. Real satisfaction is attainable only as it meets the full possibilities of human nature, including the demands upon intellectual approval and self-respect, since otherwise our complacency is in danger at any moment of being rudely shocked. This however does not mean, for a human being, full and perfect attainment that leaves nothing more to strive for. It might mean this were man a being *capable* of such full achievement. But he is not; and any ideal is self-defeating, and so undermines its own theoretical validity, if it refuses to be

realistic and to take facts as they are. The fundamental defect is the same in both cases; it comes from an attempt to ignore development, and to find the good in an achieved condition. In the one instance the attempt fails because the possibilities of achievement are wrongly taken as already reached. In the other, the impossibility of resting at any one stage of progress may be recognized, but without giving up the ideal of perfection itself; so that we are forced to locate the ideal life in some mystical and inconceivable experience out of time altogether.

It follows that true contentment, if it is not to wreck itself either on a narrow and unintelligent self-satisfaction, or on an unattainable perfection, must express itself, rather, in terms of a satisfying sense of progress. And this means that, so long as progress goes on under conditions as we actually know them—and there is, again, nothing to be gained by fitting our ideal to a world other than the one in which we live—the sense of satisfaction is not a status merely, but a matter of intelligence and will. It is something to be achieved by effort, and not simply to be enjoyed. Rational satisfaction is no dream of an undisturbed and impossibly complete felicity. It is not inconsistent with pain and sorrow, and the exclusion of many human delights. To have the least chance of success it must be weighted with a sober sense of reality, and an acceptance of the actual conditions of human living; to demand more than life can possibly give is to cut off our chance of satisfaction at the outset. We must be ready, if we are not to be always open to the inroads of discontent, to see and acquiesce in inevitable limitations, to make the best of necessarily imperfect attainment, to give up without repining what does not lend itself to our more dominant and insistent interests, to prefer defeat to success that degrades us in our own eyes. There is no

real paradox in the claim that satisfaction is open only to the man who stands prepared to give up pleasures. This only means, again, that satisfaction as a human goal is not an abstract ideal of limitless good, but presupposes a determinate human nature set to work out its destiny in determinate surroundings. That at which a sensible human being aims is no unimaginable state of the intensest possible pleasure unaccompanied by pain, but the realization that he is making the very most of life that it is possible for him, with his particular interests and limitations, to make, considering the means at his disposal. If one is not willing to accept these qualifications, he is not yet prepared to set out intelligently to secure satisfaction.

And it is a verifiable fact of experience that on these terms there is open to me, normally, the possibility of a successful and contented life, essentially unspoiled by the presence of what, considered by themselves, I must regard as evils. And if this is not just what we should prefer if it were given us to choose conditions freely, it has compensations of its own. The satisfaction that comes from measuring oneself against hostile forces never quite subject to us is no unimportant ingredient of happiness. A Stoic exercise of the will, in the resolute determination to keep the conditions of happiness under our own control, and not to be defeated by the chances of existence, belongs thus unavoidably to the rational life, and only becomes a partisan program when it violates its own spirit by timidly refusing to run any risk of defeat through aiming at a positive content of good. The danger of Stoicism lies in the temptation to too low an estimate of the possibilities of happiness. The true Stoic ideal would lead us, without letting up our effort, to insure ourselves against the bitterness that comes from a discovery that we are asking for more than fate will grant, rather than encour-

age us to ask for less than we might really get through fear of a refusal. And for a being such as man there is even something, too, in the mere facing of reality, in the recognition and acceptance of the fact that *this is so*, which helps to take away the sting of its unpleasantness. No one who aspires to be rational would want to escape unhappiness if it meant deceiving himself, and living in a fool's paradise. So long as man remains conscious of the dark background of existence, and of the precariousness of the good life, his sense for realities will not leave him "content" while trying to ignore this, and to keep experience untouched by anything that is harsh and painful.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL QUALITY AND THE "OUGHT"

The Problem of Morality.—From the standpoint of a thoroughgoing naturalistic ideal it might seem possible to stop the analysis here. But to do so would be to lay oneself open to objection from critics of a more moralistic temper. So far, it will be said, your account may possibly be correct enough, except for the fact that it misses the main point; it is the play with Hamlet left out. One can understand that, with given facts of human nature presupposed, men may set about endeavoring to realize their native impulses and desires. But what are you going to reply to a man if he tells you that he does not happen to take any interest in the sort of thing that you yourself call good? Then by definition he is absolved from adopting that particular way of life; and there is nothing you are theoretically justified in doing except to recognize that tastes differ. But the whole essence of morality is, on the contrary, that certain things are good, and others bad, whether or not a given man happens to think them so. If he does not want the particular end that men agree in calling moral, he *ought* to want it, and we condemn him in consequence. This word "ought" we have not as yet considered; but it is plain that it is a vital part of the situation.

To avoid constant risk of ambiguity, there is one meaning of the word which needs first to be distinguished, and excluded from the specifically ethical form of the problem. This is the *logical* "ought." I frequently say that I ought

to do so and so, meaning no more than that the act in question is logically bound up with some end to which I am committed. Usually we have no difficulty in distinguishing our feeling that something has to be done which we may not like because it is necessary to the attainment of a purpose, from the moral situation proper where the problem is rather one of deciding what the end itself is to be, and where, accordingly, the sense that we "ought" to prefer one end rather than another is not reducible to the logical ought that holds only between end and means. I want, for example, to take a vacation, and I find that, with this in view, I "ought" to give up some other form of gratification, since I cannot afford them both. This alternative pleasure I shall regret. But I regard its rejection simply as an unfortunate necessity, and not as a moral duty. And if, as is quite possible, I later come to the conclusion that I really want the other pleasure more than I want the holiday, I shall choose it without any sense of moral delinquency. The logical "ought" thus raises the point of expediency only, and concerns itself solely with what I *do* desire, and the means to its attainment; morality asks the question, What *ought* I to desire? or, What *end* is it my duty to choose?

The special problem left for ethical theory is accordingly: Whence arises the sense of compulsion which applies to ends rather than to means, and which does not get its force therefore from a logical relationship to some more ultimate end already accepted as valid? A logical "ought" rests upon a "because"; it always leads to another "why." If when I inquire, Why should I tell the truth? you answer, Because it contributes to the general welfare, I have at once a right to ask the question, But why ought I to consider the general welfare? And if to this you give some further answer—because, let us say, it is essen-

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tial to a rational human life—I can again fairly ask, And why ought I to be rational? A final answer must involve something more than logical connection. Nor can we stop with the mere brute existence of some desired end on which logical necessity is based. The fact that I *do* have a given desire is never enough to explain why I feel I *ought* to have it, though *if* I have it, it may lend hypothetical necessity to whatever is logically subordinate to its attainment.

This reference to the logical as distinct from the ethical "ought" may serve, however, to direct attention to one preliminary feature of the latter. It is an empirical characteristic of conscience, or the sense of duty, that in its ordinary workings the ground of obligation is *not* clearly present as an intellectual or logical form of consciousness. If I recognize expressly that my respect for the life and property of my neighbor is due to fear of the police, I do not any longer call this a sense of duty; it is a case of expediency. "Conscience" takes the form, not of a recognized connection of premise and conclusion, but of a subconscious process that comes into the open just as the sense of constraint itself. And it is not impossible, accordingly, that an act which originally was performed intentionally for reasons shown, *might* come to be called a case of conscience, if it were once to develop into a settled habit that no longer needed conscious reason as a motive force.

The Social Theory of Obligation.—One very influential theory of conscience, in modern times, takes this for its starting point. The first aspect likely to impress the philosopher, as he examines the facts of conscience, is this spontaneous and unreflective disposition to hold back from certain forms of conduct, with the accompanying uneasiness of mind at the thought of violating the inhibi-

tion. And a psychological ground for this can apparently be found in the nature of that fact of custom which undoubtedly plays a large part in the development of primitive morality. A distinctive mark of custom, taken as a form of conscious experience, is the way in which the customary is felt to be "proper," while the unfamiliar in conduct carries with it a touch of the disreputable. To account for this, we may notice, first, that the mere set of the organism in a determinate direction not only renders action along this line the natural form for action to take, while deviations from it are performed less effectively and with greater need for effort, but also *thinking* about the act is easier and more comfortable, since thinking, as well as action, likes to take the easiest path. Now it is a well established fact that any idea that persistently fixes itself in the mind tends to express itself in action. And since the reason for this lies not in the realm of conscious intelligence but in the subconscious background, when the individual comes to realize that he thus is being pressed forward in a determinate direction he will feel it, to begin with, as an unmotived sense of inner compulsion.

A striking illustration is furnished by the phenomena of hypnotism. When a subject is in the hypnotic state it is frequently possible, by suggesting to him that at some time in the future he is to perform a certain act, to cause him when the time arrives to grow uneasy, and to feel himself impelled in the direction of the suggested act without in the least knowing why. The same sort of fact, in the literature of the Freudian "wish," is used to account for the greater portion of the life of conduct, almost to the exclusion of conscious and rational motivation altogether. And if we add to this sense of felt compulsion that habit carries with it a recognition that other people

also feel the same way, we shall have essentially the experience describable as a feeling that certain forms of conduct are "proper," and so ought to be followed. The same sort of explanation can be applied also to that negative feature of the situation which is specially characteristic of the moral experience. And when custom takes the shape of a prohibition, or taboo, of acts toward which private inclination might draw us, inclination thus finding itself opposed by the combined force of habit and of public condemnation, the outcome may be thought to constitute a fairly adequate account of "conscience" in its cruder popular form. Conscience is, namely, the spontaneous feeling against such acts as violate social custom, in an individual who shares in this immediate customary restraint.

It only remains to add an explanation of the way in which social custom gets established in a form to involve constraint upon individual inclination, to have what may seem a full-fledged theory of moral obligation. The work has been done very thoroughly by the social philosophers, notably by Herbert Spencer. Spencer finds three great agencies responsible for the creation in man of this habit of social subservience—priest, policeman, and public opinion. The repressive agencies of society which punish a violation of what the tribe approves, the fear of supernatural harm, also exploited for the most part in the interests of public authority, and the natural disinclination to brave the ill will and dislike of our fellows, gradually build up a mental attitude which, immediately and without conscious thought of sanctions, awakens in the presence of the appropriate situation, and, as a sense of moral restraint, keeps desire within the bounds of the *mores*, or habitual social customs of the group.

That such influences as these are actually at work from

the very beginnings of human life, and that customs do arise that act in the manner described, there can hardly be a question. But if this is *all* we mean by oughtness, the theory suffers from one serious practical drawback. The hold of duty *as such* upon us depends largely upon our remaining in ignorance of its natural history. Custom may, and clearly it does, actually influence our conduct. But there is no reason in the world that custom itself supplies why it *ought* to influence us; and accordingly when conscience is once recognized as custom its power disappears, *except* in so far as we still find ourselves wanting the consequences which it served to promote. If on reflection I decide that I prefer to avoid the risk of jail, or that I desire the good opinion of the world, more than I want this forbidden thing, I will acquiesce in custom and my conscience. But there is no reason at all why I should continue to do this in case I find that I do not care for these things more. All the elements of the situation from which duty is supposed to arise are purely utilitarian and non-moral; and out of the non-moral no *moral* obligation can be manufactured that stands the test of reason. The source of obligatoriness, as contrasted with inclination, goes back to an outer repressive force; and while we may *have* to submit to force, we can recognize no *duty* in the matter.

The habit we originally are forced into forming may indeed, when it is once formed, carry with it a sense of inner compulsion which will persist so long as the habitual tendency persists, and perhaps even after we become psychologists and understand it. Few persons can break a taboo—in connection, say, with Sunday keeping—in which they have become thoroughly indoctrinated, without continuing for a time to feel a vague sense of mental discomfort, even though they may be fully persuaded that

they have a perfect moral right to do as they please in the matter. But as reasonable beings, nevertheless, the only judgment we can pronounce upon habit and its power of compulsion is that it is a non-moral and physiological fact; if habits are to be rationally acquiesced in, it is not because they are habits, but because for independent reasons we consider them *good* habits. In other words, again, conscience, as custom, retains its obligatoriness only in so far as it can be translated into a logical or hypothetical ought. If I want the end which it serves, I must continue to act as conscience demands. But this gives me no right to say that I ought to have a desire if I do not have it, or that I ought not to have one that is actually there.

The trouble with this outcome is that it does not seem to express either the facts or the needs of human life. It leaves us in a position that would be tolerable only in case we were quite clear about what we wanted, and the only problem left us was to find ways and means; it does not help in the more pressing task of deciding the relative worth of ends that still continue to conflict. We still are confronted with a variety of aims, with no way of ranking them other than in terms of the relative strength of their appeal to desire; there is nothing that enables us to say, as morality certainly tries to say, that one is *better* than another. And in point of fact, too, the elimination of custom as an authoritative guide does not seem actually to destroy the feeling of obligation, as apparently it should do if the theory is complete. On the contrary, the more enlightened the conscience the more sensitive it becomes to moral distinctions, and the stronger may grow its assurance that it is right in its judgments of relative worth.

And this reference to the enlightened conscience suggests another point that can be raised against a doctrine

which reduces conscience wholly to conduct that is socially approved or ordered. What are we to make of the fact that, in its higher reaches, conscience not infrequently sets itself against the common judgment, and condemns the very thing on which it is supposed to rest? It is indisputable that a man may feel under a genuine sense of obligation to stand up for some new insight against the accepted opinion of the world; and the fact that the weight of public disapproval, and perhaps of sterner forms of public reprisal, is now cast on the side of what he considers *not* to be his duty, is certainly a thing that calls for explanation. How does a conscience growing out of submission to the common opinion come to turn directly against this? It is no answer to say that we turn to an ideal audience, and back our judgment by appealing to what public opinion *would* be if it were wiser and more instructed. We are indeed very likely to do this; but it is an effect and not a cause. A public that does not yet exist can exercise no repressive force, and so has no particular pertinency to a theory which identifies conscience with social restraint. And evidently in point of fact we do not suppose the thing to be right for the reason that succeeding generations will call it so; we believe they will pass this judgment only because, independently of any public pressure whatever, we are so thoroughly convinced ourselves that it is right.

It ought once more to be made clear, perhaps, that I am not intending to deny the truth, *up to a point*, of the social theory of obligation. Conceptions of duty are without a doubt shaped very largely by the influence of our social surroundings; and the habits thus set up are sufficient to account in part for the unreasoning sense of compulsion that attends the exercise of conscience. Moreover, in so far as these habits are in line with gen-

uine human needs, the automatic compulsion they exert is practically useful. An important element even in the developed conscience is the constraint exercised over us by desired ends in so far as they have become customary, and so are only vaguely and subconsciously recognized as objects of desire; and by bringing this relation to desire before the mind, we are able to give a rational justification for the attendant feeling which helps still more to strengthen useful habit. These desirable ends set up, too, a secondary habit—the intellectual habit of *approving* them; and this also works automatically to resist their violation. The only point I am trying to make is, that this possibility of justification does presuppose always positive desire. And *unless* I find that I want the end which social custom prescribes, there is no reason left, so far as the theory tells us, why I should any longer submit to restraint. This, once more, seems to leave the rational man with no allegiance due to any "ought" except the ought involved in a necessary relation of means to end. But empirically the moral consciousness is not satisfied with this. In the sense of duty I *seem* to feel precisely this, that the thing which I am sensible of *wanting* most is *not* the thing I ought to want. And unless I can find the source of this "ought" in something more substantial than the physiological compulsion that attends habit, it seems to undermine such a conviction, and to leave my recognition of the value of ends dependent solely on the strength of personal desire.

Kant's Theory of Obligation.—Before proceeding further in the attempt to analyze this demand, it will be convenient to examine a theory of conscience which goes to the opposite extreme from the preceding one, and tries to save the absolute and objective character of duty by denying entirely its dependence on the empirical self or

on desire. The form which this has most frequently taken in popular thought is that of a divine voice speaking to man from within, which tells him infallibly, apart from experience and a calculation of consequences, just where right and wrong lie. In this crude interpretation the theory is now largely abandoned by theorists, and therefore it will not be necessary to examine it critically. Its philosophical essence, however, has come to play a large part in latter-day ethical discussion through its adoption in a very subtle form by the philosopher Kant, whose influence on modern thought has everywhere been extraordinarily great.

The initial point of significance in Kant's contention lies, in contrast with the evolutionary theory, in his full conviction that moral good is objectively valid, and that it has a hold upon us which is unconditionally and categorically necessary. It can scarcely be disputed that the plain man's conscience *seems* to say to him, not that there are certain things he must not do *if* he wants to attain his desires, or escape unpleasant consequences, but, simply, that he must not do them. The evolutionary explanation, it has appeared, tends to abandon this natural moral claim. For rationally justifying the dictates of conscience it leaves us with a hypothetical imperative only. If you want to keep out of jail, or go to heaven, or retain a good reputation with your neighbors, you must do so and so; but if you do not want these things, you are logically left free to act as you please. In case a man desires to keep his old conviction that there is something more absolute than this in moral obligation, the best the theory can do is to leave him in his original happy ignorance, where custom works unrestrained by insight into reasons why, while having nevertheless to admit that if duty thus is psychologically absolute it is also perfectly

irrational, and that the object of moral condemnation remains in the end everywhere on a par, logically, with eating with one's knife, or attending a reception in a business suit, or with any of the other things that we refrain from doing simply because they aren't done.

Kant's adoption of a starting point accordingly is due to perfectly plain and simple considerations; so far, he really is more empirical than the empiricists. The evolutionist has said in effect: Here is an aspect of ethical experience which does not fit in with my understanding of the world; therefore I shall proceed to explain it away. To which it is open to reply: Are you really ready to take the consequences? If indeed a man is prepared to abandon the ethical judgment of mankind in favor of a scientific theory, there is probably nothing to be done except to ask him to be clear-headed enough to recognize the real nature of his proceeding, and not to continue to talk in terms of duty after he has left out the essential thing that duty has always meant. Meanwhile Kant holds it more philosophical to accept the analysis of the ethical experience at its face value, and then go on to consider what consequences this implies, instead of using our *a priori* philosophies to settle whether or not we shall admit recognized moral claims. As in his theoretical philosophy Kant takes for granted the fact of causality as necessary in order that we should have any connected experience to begin with, and then proceeds to ask in what sort of a world causality can intelligibly be thought as having a place, so he may be regarded as pointing to the fact of duty as necessary if experience is to have any *significance* for human beings. And *some* significance in the world, some real distinctions of value that lay constraint upon his will, no man can very well help accepting.

The first question is, then, a question of fact; have

we here a genuine feature in the moral judgment? Of this, as has been said, Kant entertains no doubt at all. It does not excuse a man for gratifying a vicious taste that he should proclaim a readiness to take the consequences; you ought not, we say to him, to have the taste, or, if you do have it, to indulge it. The ought is absolute and universal, and not at all contingent on what a particular man happens to like. So far this may be regarded as simply a recognition of the logic implicit in the feeling of the ought. In saying that we ought not to have certain desires—and common morality does say this unhesitatingly—we seem to suggest that oughtness, since it passes judgment on desire, cannot be reduced to desire or developed out of it. Desire appears to be in *some* interpretation outside the moral situation, the object of legislation and not its source. But when we turn to the further and distinctive aspects of the Kantian theory, judgment is likely to become more hesitant. Setting out in conformity with the moral conviction of common sense, it turns this to a use that soon leaves common opinion far behind, and that issues in a series of ethical paradoxes.

The source of this divergence is to be found in the fact that Kant does not simply recognize oughtness as a constituent part of the ethical experience, but takes it as the *whole* of ethics; duty, and not the good, becomes the ultimate ethical concept. This statement is perhaps not strictly accurate, since Kant does make duty from a certain standpoint derivative, and good an ultimate fact. His theory presupposes one thing which is absolutely good—a will which wills universal law. And since, if man were a purely rational being and not immersed also in the world of sense, he would will this as a matter of course without compulsion, the sense of duty belongs in a way to phenomenal experience. We feel obligation only when

the true or rational self, as willing law, comes in conflict with the empirical self which is subject to inclination or desire. But while the element of *constraint* is thus secondary, the essential character of duty as *law* remains ultimate. And if this fact of rational and necessary law is called "good," such a claim at least cannot be intended to subordinate it in any way to a higher category. Of course as a matter of fact Kant is here picking out the one thing in the world which to him personally, as a rationalistic philosopher, appeals as most admirable—abstract rational necessity—and taking it as self-evidently good without concerning himself to raise the question "why"; otherwise he would have had to explain how this fact of approval on his part, and how the "respect" for the law which he leaves as the only moral motive, differ from other cases of approval and motivation which he has set aside as merely empirical.

Meanwhile it is true that if, for the complete moral experience, we have to wait for the introduction of a sense of duty, then of morality in this final and distinguishing sense duty is the special and characteristic feature. It is the doctrine of the present volume, however, that duty is only one aspect of a larger ethical situation. The ultimate definition of ethics is in terms of a satisfying life; and duty is to be interpreted as somehow incidental to man's endeavor to reach this goal, and not as the violent intrusion of a new end which alters the whole nature of the problem. For Kant, on the contrary, the moment a question of duty comes in, man's life has taken a new tack; he has passed from the purely naturalistic quest for happiness to what for the first time belongs to ethics. And the consequence is that for settling this new problem he is constrained from using any of the material of the natural life. This is all of it contin-

gent—a sort of fact we simply find is so without seeing any reason why it might not be quite otherwise. But the essence of morality is that it is universal; and you can never, Kant holds, draw a universal truth from any conceivable number of empirical facts. From experience you may derive a rule of expediency, and get the right to say that a given course of conduct will probably have certain desirable consequences; you can never say categorically that it ought always to be followed.

Desire then is of no service for identifying the good, since desire has been left behind. Equally it can furnish no *motive* to moral action. The morality even of a good act is compromised if we are attracted toward it and want to do it; we must act simply out of respect for the law of duty as such if we are to be genuinely moral. Kant's problem is accordingly to deduce the material of the moral life from this abstraction of duty—to define a concrete moral end which is not given empirically by human nature and its needs, but is spun out of the bare recognition that there is a universal law imposing obligation on us.

In the nature of the case the task must appear a rather hopeless one. To one at least who thinks that duty is only a partial aspect of a situation, it will not seem reasonable to expect to reconstruct the whole situation out of this aspect alone. Kant does what he can however; and as a *tour de force* his effort is impressive. Since universality is the essence of the moral judgment, and since the will has been deprived of dependence on any external impulse, there remains nothing to serve the will as a principle except the universal conformity of its acts to law in general; that is, I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. An end defined by reason alone must be true for all

rational beings. Of any proposed course of action, therefore, a man has to inquire, Can this be turned into a law for all men and all occasions? If so, it is *right;* and thus a concrete filling is given to the abstract notion of duty, without needing to call in the empirical facts of desire. If for example a man wants to find out whether a lying promise is consistent with duty, the short and infallible way is to ask himself, Should I be content for my conduct to hold good as a universal law? Am I ready to say that *any* one may make a deceitful promise when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself? "Then I presently become aware that while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all, since it would be in vain to allege my intention in regard to my future actions to those who would not believe this allegation, or if they overhastily did so would pay me back in my own coin." Any act which, if universalized, is necessarily self-defeating, is thereby condemned by reason. Or if we allow the rightness of truth-telling as a general rule, but claim an exception on our own behalf, we fall equally into a contradiction. By calling it right we implicitly assign it universality; whereas in practice we are taking it as if it were not universal, but admitted of exceptions.

The reply that will be at once forthcoming to this is, that while the principle is a useful tool for the moral life so long as we are able to apply it to ends already accepted, it fails to work if we really are consistent in presupposing no distinction whatever of good and bad prior to its application. What really it does is, not to supply the content of the good, but to deny the *privacy* of the good when this already is recognized. If moral law is universal, this universality does indeed carry with

it the conclusion, not that, as Kant maintains, no act can be moral when dependent in any sense upon inclination, but that my act is not moral if I am led by private inclination to make of myself an exception to the general rule. But this is so far from creating the good out of mere universality, that it implies the contrary.

For *any* conduct can be universalized provided one does not care what happens. Kant says that lying cannot be made a law because otherwise promises would not continue to be made. But why *should* promises be made? Obviously because we presuppose that the coöperative human life, which requires for its maintenance a measure of good faith, is itself good and desirable; and this we could not do without appealing back to the natural basis of desire which Kant has thrown overboard. If we did not already think coöperation good for something, all we should need to do would be to decide to get along without it, and no bar to making lying a universal law would remain. A diplomat might equally argue that truth-telling cannot be made universal, because if every diplomat spoke the truth it would put a stop to the diplomatic game; and if the one argument is not as good as the other, it is only because we are less assured to begin with that diplomacy is a valuable end. Both equally involve a contradiction, but in both cases only for the man who has already accepted the end involved. Kant's method of procedure will not work at all, then, except as the universal form of morality presupposes ends already taken as worth while. And these ends, since they are not reducible to a purely logical basis, can be found only in connection with the empirical facts of human nature which Kant has ruled out as non-moral.

Equally impossible to defend on any basis that our everyday morality can accept is the conclusion that the

sole moral motive is respect for duty as such. Naturally if the ethical fact in experience is *nothing but* the aspect of oughtness, an act done because we like to do it is, not of course wrong, but a purely non-moral fact of natural history. But if instead we are willing to hold, as Kant was not, that the fundamental concept of ethics is the *good*, conceived as that which genuinely satisfies human nature, then while there still remains a chance of making duty an objectively necessary element in the quest for good, and conscientiousness *a* moral virtue, we can also recognize that the true end of life is not fully attained until we love the good for its own sake, and do not *merely* do it as a matter of conscience. This does not make it necessary to drop universality from the idea of the good. Its universal and public character is one of its titles to our regard. But it does imply that in so far as this comes home to our feeling merely as a law constraining us, and is not merged in the concrete goodness of its setting, we have only reached a half-way house in the moral life.

The Nature of the Problem.—If then it appears that the attempt to ground the objective character of duty in the transcendental and the *a priori* is a failure, it remains to turn back to the empirical field of human nature, and ask whether here some element has not been overlooked that will help to remedy the deficiencies in the "social" theory of conscience. The general logic of the situation is fairly simple. What we are after is a source for the negative feeling of compulsion—as distinct from positive desire—which will stand the test of a critical scrutiny; and one which, also, does not reduce itself to the merely logical relation of means to end. The difficulty in making habit responsible lay in the fact that there is nothing in habit as such to protect it against disintegrating criticism. If accordingly we were to find some element of

human nature that is natural rather than artificial, and that proves itself an integral part of us through the refusal to disappear, or to abate its pretensions, when it is brought to consciousness, a discovery of its influence need not have the same effect as in the case of habit. Provided always we can presuppose a healthy confidence in the validity and significance of our natural tendencies—and without this no positive belief is possible in any line—then the locating of the ground of belief in the structure of our constitution ought logically to strengthen its claims.

In order to determine the possibility of such a solution we need to return to the empirical facts, and ask again just how the conception of the *moral* good—the good that "ought to be chosen"—differs from the more general notion of the good. Suppose I want very much some personal gratification—unquestionably in itself a good—but know that it is going to entail serious injury to other people. The ordinary use of language scarcely justifies me in saying that my active desire for these other men's good is more intense than my personal craving. In proportion as this last engages me, is any competing claim likely to impress me as a nuisance rather than a potential satisfaction of desire. Nevertheless even when the social claim is felt as contrary to desire, no normal moral nature can, on reflection, well avoid assigning it a superior rank. Whatever the strength or weakness of our personal interest in it, it is, we shall probably admit, a "higher" end, and "ought" to constrain our will.

This suggests the first point in the definition of moral goodness. The full moral problem, the problem of the ought, involves not merely the recognition of goodness, but also a comparison of various claimants to the title of the good—the notion not of "good" simply, but of

"better." A man enjoys a simple experience of pleasure, say the pleasure of taste; he can look back on it and call it good without any reference to a better at all. But so far no moral situation has arisen. It is only when we judge, not that various things are good, but that there are different degrees of goodness, that our judgment has the chance of becoming in the distinctive sense an ethical one, in which the conception of "duty" begins to figure. What, then, is the content of the word "better"?

The Definition of "Quality."—The first and simplest suggestion—that better is nothing but a quantitative term, and means, simply, "more of it"—is already ruled out implicitly by the statement of the problem. For a Benthamite theory this might seem a possibility; but it is not consistent with the recognition of a genuine "ought." We doubtless do always prefer more good to less; but I see no reason at all, on the purely quantitative basis, why we *ought* to prefer it, or why such a preference should be regarded as morally right. Suppose I have a choice between a weaker and an intenser pleasure—between eating one article of food which I like and another for which I do not greatly care. I am not arguing that I shall choose the latter pleasure, for clearly this is not the case. I only say I am not in the slightest degree under obligation to take the former one, though by failing to do so I am reducing by so much the content of possible good in the universe. And as a matter of fact it seems pretty clear that "quality" is a distinctive aspect in experience, introspectively to be distinguished from any form of quantity; and that we do judge certain ends "higher" than others, irrespective of any comparison in terms of the amount of pleasure they yield or the intensity of our desire for them.

In the second place, still in the way of exclusion, we

may rule out one interpretation of quality also as obviously having no bearing on the immediate problem. There is a sense in which every feeling may be said to have its own peculiar and irreducible "quality." The pleasure of eating is one sort of pleasure, that of solving a mathematical problem is quite another sort. This however is plainly not the sense with which we are at present concerned; and in so far it gives us no right to rank one sort as "higher" than another. Quality in this elementary sense belongs to things singly in their own right, whereas betterness is a relational term, and emerges only in the comparison of two different goods.

Another attempt to define the nature of quality, of some notoriety in the history of speculative ethics, may also be put aside without much consideration. Mill, who has the distinction among the hedonists of being the first to recognize unambiguously the distinctive fact of quality, suggests that superiority in quality may mean, simply, that which experts agree in preferring. And it seems to be the case that, if there is such a thing as objective quality at all, we are likely on the whole to find it in the consensus of the most competent human judgment. Even when I feel convinced that my own private insight sees more truly than any social judgment yet in existence, it would be difficult for me to retain my confidence were I not persuaded that other men also would come to my opinion if they would lay themselves open to the right sort of experience. But this is calculated to throw doubt on the claim that an agreement of experts is a *definition* of superior quality, though such an agreement may often be a good sign that a given value judgment is a correct one. For if we may reach a true judgment in advance of agreement, the natural inference is that we are able to perceive some character not visible to others; and in that

case the quality is the *cause* of the agreement, rather than something that grows out of it.

There is another possible way of analyzing quality that may next be suggested; and this will, I think, take us in point of fact a certain distance toward our destination. Just as goodness is a character which things take on in so far as the thought of them is pleasant, so a qualitative difference will, it seems to me, be found in a similar fashion to accompany any good which excites in me that æsthetic or semi-æsthetic feeling of *admiration* to which there has already been occasion to refer. The proof of such a claim is, again, purely of an empirical sort. But if the experiment is made of comparing two objects, one of which is more successful in calling forth our admiration, I believe it will be found impossible to avoid this sense of qualitative superiority. Thus the more admirable intellectual capacity appears to any one, the higher in kind he will almost certainly be found to place it as compared with other human traits; while the fact that men differ greatly in their admirations, and that the feeling is influenced by many modifying conditions, gives an easy explanation of the difficulty of arriving at authoritative judgments about qualitative rank. If we try to pick out this or that special character as the basis of our standard, this impossibility of getting people to agree is a serious drawback. But if quality be actually dependent on æsthetic feeling, such a feeling may readily have a source that varies according to circumstances.

But while in this way we may be enabled, as I believe we are, to assign a meaning to quality, it will appear on consideration that we again are falling short of a solution of our original problem. For admiration still is lacking in any necessary reference to that which constitutes the central feature of morality—the feeling of the ought.

The essence of the thing, in the case of *ethical* quality, lies in the claim to command action; and admiration carries with it no such necessary claim. The connection with obligation is indeed often a very close one, as will perhaps appear more clearly later on. But if we take that which is admirable wholly by itself, and do not complicate it with any further judgment, its separableness from a sense of duty seems fairly evident. My admiration of the artist's skill does not make it incumbent on me to imitate this skill. Even the supposedly moral quality of saintliness one may appreciate as admirable without feeling that he has himself the gift. So in general I admire instinctively in so far the bigger or more able or more energetic man. But when I see another man with modest talents who does his best, ethically I honor him equally with his more gifted competitor, though my intellect recognizes that he is intrinsically a smaller and, in intellectual terms, less admirable man; and were he himself, overlooking differences of capacity, to take the goal of such a competitor as his own, instead of paying it his tribute of admiration simply, it is likely that he would only be laying up for himself the trouble that always comes from failing to recognize facts.

"Moral" Quality and the Nature of Oughtness.—It still remains therefore to look further for the final character which distinguishes not only quality from quantity, but moral quality from the æsthetic quality of admirableness. Now there is one additional circumstance that I think will always be found attaching to the distinctively moral experience of duty. I admire the strenuous man, the man of energy and effectiveness; but do I feel that I ought to imitate him? I may, or I may not; and if I do, the constitutive nature of the experience cannot lie in the feeling of admiration, since this is present in either case.

But it might conceivably be looked for in the further fact that, in the former instance, I have a feeling of *distaste* also for my less strenuous self. I do not *need* to have this last. I may simply recognize that we are differently constituted, and go my own way serenely. But *if* I have it, then, it may be claimed, it is also true that I shall have the experience of feeling that I *ought* not to rest satisfied with my lesser effort. For a man may fairly be challenged to act in opposition to a reasonable and instinctive feeling of dislike or disapprobation without experiencing some sense of inner constraint.

That this element is often overlooked in the analysis of obligation is probably due to the fact that it is so closely and so commonly tied up with the positive feeling of admiration. Take, for example, the familiar contention that "reason" is the source of obligation. It seems plausible when we are told that we "ought" to be rational. We do feel this way about it commonly; and so it is natural to stop here as if we were in possession of a final explanation. But if we are inclined to look to the admirableness of rationality as itself explicitly a source of our conviction, we might try the experiment of expunging in imagination from our attitude all sense of the futility and ignominy of a life of folly and unreason, leaving only a disinterested admiration of its opposite. And I find it difficult to suppose that any feeling of duty in the matter would then remain. Reason would represent, like beauty, a good of a superior kind. But if one chose to pass it by for other more irrational goods, I cannot see why anybody should deny him the right to suit himself. The same point can be raised about the attempt to interpret the claim of reason in the form of a more rational, or larger, or social *self*, which puts restraint upon a lesser self. This doubtless also represents a fact of the ethical experience. But

if obligation stands for a conflict between two inner selves, the superior right of one of these selves to issue its commands has still to be accounted for; why should not my passions, too, say to my reason or my social instincts, You ought? It is seldom, as I have said, that any attempt is made to push further an analysis of the claims of reason. For the most part rationalistic philosophers have themselves been so infatuated with the rational life that they have seen no particular occasion to examine the nature of its credentials. Professor Sidgwick however is an exception here; and it may be well to look more in detail at his position, in order to verify the thesis which I have advanced.

Sidgwick argues that there are certain purely rational propositions which I have only to set clearly before my mind to be able to see not only that they are true, but that their truth involves a moral demand upon me as well. Thus, if I consider the self-evident proposition that more good is better than less good, I shall, I am told, discover with intuitive certainty that, purely as rational, it constrains a rational being to take as his ethical end, not his own happiness simply, but his greatest possible happiness, and not merely his *own* greatest happiness, but the greatest happiness of mankind—assuming, of course, that happiness is a good. It tells him that it is irrational to prefer himself to the greater claims of others; for in the eye of reason he is but a single unit, and there is no rational ground for giving to one unit any arbitrary preference over another, or for taking it for more than its proportional part of the whole. And if pure reason is thus competent to justify the general or social happiness as an ethical end, which in its very nature has a rational claim upon our action, we have the clue for unraveling the whole ethical situation; and since reason is

universal and the same for all men, a true objectivity is secured for moral law.

I think that on consideration it will appear that Professor Sidgwick's claim here overlooks the most essential point. The proposition that more good is always better than less good *might* mean only this, that more good contains a larger quantity of good than less good. This is an identical proposition, and reason is perfectly competent to take care of it. But evidently it is not such a purely quantitative meaning that it is supposed to have. What the proposition needs to mean, in order to escape the charge of being a verbal and innocuous one, is that to *choose* a greater good is morally better than to choose a lesser one—that we ought, that is, in every case to do it. I have already raised the question whether this is always true. Other things being considered equal, there is no moral obligation to choose a greater pleasure for myself rather than a lesser one; if I am willing to put up with a smaller amount of good in the shape of pleasure, no one has the slightest grievance. I can indeed say that I shall be a *fool* not to follow my own greatest happiness, and that no man ought to be a fool; but here the "ought" may plausibly be held to depend upon the feeling of repugnance which the thought of folly arouses in me, and so to have left behind the purely rational proposition.

And wherever the rational obligation to choose the greater good holds, it will always be found to imply in this way, in addition to intellectual intuition, some element of restrictive feeling. Consider, as perhaps a clearer case, the attitude of the man who contemplates making an unjust exception in his own favor, and allowing himself to count for more than one in the distribution of human happiness. I do not at all deny that the rational perception

of inequality may give rise to a motive which puts constraint upon desire. But if it does, it is because it touches off some more ultimate feeling of distaste; it does not get it purely in its own right. A cold-bloodedly selfish man could in his moments of greatest selfishness still perceive that one is less than two; but, he would say, why should this affect my *action*—which is something lying quite beyond the realm of mathematics—any more than the perception that a dozen is twelve times one should lead me to eat a dozen dinners in spite of the absence of appetite? Something of a very different sort however enters into the situation in case I find myself, as is clearly possible, instinctively taking the other man's point of view, and feeling a sense of revolt and uneasiness at the subordination of his just claims to my own private demands; here I begin to come in contact with a real restraining force. Or—and this is what appears in particular to be back of Professor Sidgwick's claim for reason—I may translate the judgment of the less into a judgment of the "trivial." Then the intellectual perception that the greater is more than the less would, indeed, when applied to the superiority of the general good over what is just mine, get an ethical significance. But the trivial differs from the less precisely in the emotional feeling of dislike which accompanies it. Of such a feeling one ingredient is in a special sense connected with the intellect—the distaste which a reasonable being has for falling below the standard of impartiality and intellectual fairness, as he would do were he to exalt the claims of one unit over the—in the eyes of reason—equal claims of others. The intellectual dislike of "inconsistency," or of allowing personal and irrelevant considerations to influence a purely objective survey of fact, may enter as an

important element into my state of mind. But an "intellectual" dislike is still a dislike, and not a bare rational perception of relationships.

We are, accordingly, brought back again to the previous thesis, as a working hypothesis for a theory of obligation. For the peculiarity of the sense of oughtness I am able to discover no underlying reason except this new fact that there is aroused in me a feeling of repugnance or dislike. It is not enough that, for the moral experience, we should have a recognition of the "good," or even a comparison of goods. If I simply compare what I *like* with what I like *more*, and do not feel a positive *dis*like to the thought of one alternative, there is no sense of *ethical* quality, but only of the quantitatively greater, or of the æsthetically more admirable. On the other hand this does not mean of course that we can never think of anything with displeasure without feeling a sense of duty. It is only under specific conditions that the moral experience appears. But in case such an emotional repugnance is directed against something for which we also have an active craving, it then will tend to act quite in the way called for in an empirical description of the ought—as a restraint upon desire, in that it makes us, in spite even of strong desire, uncomfortable when we disregard it. The thought of some *gaucherie* or blunder will likewise call forth a feeling of repugnance or dislike; but it is not a moral situation for this reason, that no independent tendency exists to perform the act which is reprobated, and so no sense of "ought not" can arise. We thus are able to speak of acts, or pleasures, as higher and lower, in the sense that carries obligation with it, because alongside, and working in opposition to that which pulls us positively in their direction, there is present another element—a sense of conscious repulsion—influencing our

judgment about this very same object which, in its immediate form as impulse, attracts us. And in so far as these feelings are really grounded in human nature, they meet the rational requirements which mere custom, or the more or less pathological inhibitions which play such a part in the Freudian psychology, fail to meet, in that they are not destroyed by the critical analysis which brings them into the light of day.

The Psychological Sources of the Ought.—It only remains to point more explicitly to the existence of such feelings in particular which actually influence our judgments. And I shall mention here briefly the ones that seem to me most important, though it is not necessary to suppose that the list is exhaustive.

There is, to begin with, the negative aspect of the æsthetic emotion—the feeling for the ugly. That the æsthetic ugliness of an act or quality is frequently an element in its moral character would be very generally recognized. Why do I feel that sensuality is ethically to be condemned and that piggishness is not a human virtue? To some appreciable extent, at least, out of an æsthetic disgust. With a certain refinement of taste, which I find is so generally capable of being developed under proper conditions that it justifies its place in my conception of human nature, piggishness arouses an immediate feeling of dislike. And this æsthetic dislike of the ugly may, as appears conspicuously in the Greek ideal of life, play a very considerable part in leading us to condemn as unseemly many forms of conduct to which the natural appetites might prompt us.

A second form of emotional revolt that also clearly acts as a restraining force is the instinctive reaction against selfish aggression and cruelty—what may perhaps be called moral indignation. This is an obviously important

ingredient in the concept of injustice, as will appear more fully in a later connection. Along with it, and pointing in the same general direction, is the feeling of sympathy or pity, whose possible effectiveness in the way of putting restraint upon our native inclinations figures prominently in, for example, the theory and practice of Buddhism. The two together may be called the social element in the "ought." It is very probable that the primary incidence of the sense of indignation, at least, is upon the acts of our fellows rather than on our own desires. But it remains empirically true that, at some stage of development at any rate, the feelings all become capable of being directed against the inner pressure of positive inclination or impulse as well.

That disgust and indignation and pity are actual emotional forces in the normal human life I am taking for granted here without much elaboration, since the facts are sufficiently obvious. One further emotional feeling calls however for a more extended scrutiny, not only because it is obscurer in itself, but because it will be found, I believe, to be of very particular importance for understanding the nature of the sense of obligation in its more developed form. Indeed it even seems to lend to the preceding feelings also their final touch of authority. Let us suppose that a man is experiencing a sense of æsthetic disgust at some act or impulse of his own. So long as the sentiment persists he will feel himself constrained dumbly not to violate it; but it does not of itself supply any answer to the question *why* this should be so. Nevertheless it does not follow that no answer of any sort is possible. And if I undertake to press the question, *Why* should I admit the claims of decency and seemliness over strong desire? I shall almost certainly find the answer taking some such form as this: You cannot perform an act of

this sort, and still retain your sense of self-respect. The thing is low, unworthy of you, mean and small.

This last emotional attitude, which, it will be noticed, attaches closely to the exercise of the valuing and comparing intellect, and which might be called a dislike of, or contempt for, that which is petty and trivial, and unworthy of human powers, is one whose nature and source it is somewhat less easy to locate. Judgments about relative importance it is easy to understand; such are the quantitative judgments of which there has already been occasion to speak. What now we are considering is the possibility that this may lend itself to a judgment of qualitative difference as well, by the addition, to the mere perception of more or less, of an active feeling of dislike toward the idea of the quantitatively inferior. The more thoroughly the ethical experience is canvassed, the more pervasive will this sort of judgment be found to be. It is indeed an unsafe feeling to follow blindly, since it so readily allies itself with our natural inclination to be snobs. But the feeling of contempt for the narrow and the petty is in itself clearly not incapable of justification. Thus a part of the objection to sensualism is, undoubtedly, a recognition of the insignificant character of its objects of ambition, in view of all the many interesting things that might be done in the world; the result does not look big enough to justify intellectually our practical claim for its supreme importance. So of self-absorption in any form. When we consider it impartially, there arises a feeling of its trivialness as an end; what is the sense of my being wrought up about my private concerns in a universe which contains so many more momentous interests? It may be added that this same form of judgment helps to correct its own excesses, and so explains why at times the condemnation of the trivial is itself condemned.

An aristocratic condescension, of birth, or brains, or culture, toward that which is supposed to be common and lacking in distinction, is usually best met by turning light upon the intellectual and spiritual limitations of the typical aristocratic temper.

A satisfactory analysis of this final sort of judgment is, as I say, not altogether simple. It is not mere size or bigness that affects us, although we have this natural admiration for impressiveness and weight and power, and even find its presence insensibly operating to moderate the repugnance which on other grounds we might be led to feel. Sinning on a scale large enough goes a certain way in the popular mind toward lessening our condemnation, and the Devil has always, and naturally, had admirers. But the admiration of bigness and forcefulness has no necessary relation to a dislike for that which lacks the quality; the tiny helplessness of a child, for example, has a positive charm of its own. And with this our best moral insight seems to agree. It does not allow us to despise relative weakness as such, the lesser man simply because he is not built upon an ampler scale; in fact the disposition to show contempt for weakness allies itself with a serious moral defect.

I think that a possible clue to the answer may be reached, if we turn to the impression which a display of energy and power makes upon us when we meet it in the natural world. Why do we feel attracted toward such an exhibition of force in nature—a thunder storm or a raging torrent? The experience is complex of course, and there are various reasons; but the deepest reason is hardly just a quantitative one. Ultimately it is not because it is so *big*, but because it is so *real*. For a creature whose fate at any moment may depend on the ability to separate realities from illusions, it would indeed be

strange if the intellectual recognition of being in contact with reality did not have the power to generate an appropriate feeling. There is an immense comfort and satisfaction in the sense that one is brought up against, and rests upon, the solid foundation of the real, which enters as a more and more vital element into the inner life as it grows in intensity and power of discrimination. The quantitatively big has its part in developing this sense, because here the real world is able to force our recognition beyond dispute. But the time comes when experience of disillusion and unreality causes us to give welcome to *anything*, great or small, if only it is genuine, substantial, a thing to count on and not find slipping from our grasp, or failing us in time of need. And now while an admiration for mere bigness does not carry with it any necessary condemnation of that which lacks the quality, we cannot approve reality, if reality is what gives firm footing to our lives, without thereby being constrained to entertain a contrary feeling of dislike toward the absence of reality, as offering no stimulus to our active powers, or, in the form of illusion, as promising a stimulus and then disappointing us.

I am accordingly disposed to analyze the judgment of triviality into the sense of intellectual repugnance which a recognition of unreality tends to evoke. And the terms that naturally express it—the trivial, the paltry, the petty—help to bear this out. The trivial is not an absolute term, but a relative. A thing is not trivial just because it is small. It is trivial because it is inadequate to something, because it is *too* small to justify itself in a given situation. But unreality also is relative. We have no notion of reality, in the concrete, out of all relation to the human; the real, for our understanding, is what we can count on, what genuinely lends itself to human

life as serving in some fashion its needs. And as anything we can bring before our minds at all can conceivably find *some* need which it will serve, nothing whatever is absolutely unreal. It is unreal *in so far* as it fails us—in so far, that is, as it is trivial and practically worthless. It follows that no particular quantitative amount of reality is necessary if it is to avoid being condemned as trivial, and so the greater or smaller human capacity is not by itself an occasion for the judgment. Nor is it the inadequacy of a man's powers to a specific situation which calls it forth—this may demand pity rather than condemnation; it is rather the inadequacy of the end itself.

This last statement calls attention to what will appear perhaps to be the most distinctive aspect of the matter. It is not the act as such that we condemn as trivial; it is, in the end, the presence of a *judgment* inadequate to the realities of the situation. As itself an intellectual or value judgment, "triviality" is directed primarily against the irrational estimate of relative values which the trivial act implies. Thus it is not so much the seeking of pleasure which makes me despise a man; it is the revelation in his attitude of how absurdly he is overrating such an end in comparison with worthier ones. The unreality of the standard which, as supposedly a rational being, he himself sets up, is what condemns him; the animal who seeks for pleasure, but who does not claim to be rational, I do not despise. So pretentiousness, conceit, arrogance, are likewise condemned as trivial, because they lay bare a valuation which has no relationship to reality and fact.

I may notice briefly in conclusion that we have no need to go beyond the previous analysis to account in essence also for that secondary aspect of conscience which most theories fail to connect very closely with the sense of duty—the experience of remorse when conscience is vio-

lated. For if the agent of constraint is a feeling of disapproval, this will still continue to be present after desire has disappeared, and will pronounce its reflective judgment on our conduct.

Summary.—To sum up, accordingly, the ethically "better" is equivalent to that which we "ought to do"; but what we ought to do is not an ultimate notion, but is capable of analysis. The moral "ought" is, in the first place, a restraining force, in terms of feeling, exerted upon impulse or desire. As such it is a bare "ought not," which carries no necessary reference in consciousness to an alternative "better." But since the failure to act in one manner is commonly set over against the choice of an alternative action, we are in a secondary way led to speak of that which we "ought to do," in distinction from that which we "ought not." And thereby the alternative action takes on a comparative quality of its own, tinged by the specifically moral feeling that comes from this sense of emotional inhibition; and we have for the first time the qualitative better in the genuinely *ethical* sense.

In strictness, then, we are not under obligation to do a thing because it is better, in this ultimate moral meaning. It is ethically better because we ought to do it—because, that is, the alternative act which implies the neglect to do it calls forth the "ought not" feeling. And if such a statement seems not quite true to the moral facts, I think this will be found to come from overlooking the ambiguity in the term "better." For it will very commonly be true that the morally better has also the positive attribute of what I have called "æsthetic" quality. Indeed it may at times be just because it is first recognized as better in this latter sense that its alternative excites our disapproval, and so comes within the field of duty. I say that I ought to make some effort to "cultivate my

mind," though my natural laziness would find a course of idle amusement more congenial. Very likely the issue would never become a live one did I not first recognize a cultivated mind as "higher" than an uncultivated one, in the sense that it is a good which forces in some degree my natural admiration. But mere admiration by itself, once more, is no sufficient guarantee that I shall hold it *ethically* better, or something that I "ought to do," since I admire many things that do not set me a duty. The latter judgment implies not only that I admire brains, but that this leads me to *dislike* the laziness and stupidity to which I am prone; and so it rests in the end on the negative feeling of the "ought not."

One final point it may be worth while adding here. Moral good differs, it has been seen, from natural good, in that we not only find it existing, but judge that it "ought to be"; and since the feeling of oughtness arises only under conditions of conflict with inclination, this limits the moral good to the sphere of human conduct. It does not appear justifiable to assert that any "object," or purely objective value out of relation to conduct, "ought" to be, except perhaps in the sense in which this may be taken as a purely formal analysis of the content of the "ought" judgment, with no metaphysical implications. We may call an object *worthy* of existence, meaning that it is not simply good in this or that aspect of it, but is relatively immune from the risk of exciting those feelings of repugnance and dislike that give rise to the ethical ought. But this still falls short of the judgment that it has any right to claim existence. No form of good, however pure and high, can by itself assert such a claim. Beauty, for example, is a thing which clearly we should *like* to find real; and the world, we do not hesitate to say, will be a better world for its reality. But why

ought it to be a better world rather than a worse, when divorced from all relation to the choice of responsible beings? If I—or a God—were accountable for the world, then only do I find myself able to say intelligibly that it ought to be a world that embodies a higher good rather than a lower; because I should mean that the maker of the world, supposing him with power to do as he willed, would be acting in a way we are bound to condemn were he to choose the less instead of the greater perfection. But this presupposes that we already know the meaning of the "better," and that the "ought" is something in addition to that meaning. What ought to be is, accordingly, not beauty, but the creation of beauty; not perfect justice, but the continuous endeavor to be perfectly just. The "object" is only a shorthand expression for the goal of the ought, and is not its immediate content.

Now if there be anything at all deserving to be called a "universal" or an absolute good—something that is good always, under whatever circumstances—presumably it will be found in connection with this sphere of moral action, since there is no natural good whose attainment at times may not conflict with duty. A concrete case of conduct, to be sure, though it may be possible to speak of it as absolutely good or right, is hardly to be called an absolute good; since each deed is unique, it can be absolute only in the sense that it is the one deed that meets fully the given situation, and not as meaning that it is always or universally good. Nor do the *consequences* of an act call forth more than a judgment of utilitarian or prudential goodness. There is left only one thing that might seem to have some title to be called a universal good—action regarded as the expression of an inner disposition or state of mind. This is a "good" because, as a source of conduct, the inner attitude is a necessary condition of

human happiness or satisfaction. And it is also a *moral* good *in so far* as it recognizes as necessary to happiness the acceptance of the moral restraints, and so comes itself under the judgment of the ought. Thus not every form of human disposition which constitutes a natural good is moral. Natural fearlessness, for example, is admired, and judged to be good. But it fails to become a "virtue" until it takes the form of "courage"; and courage differs from fearlessness in that it is no mere spontaneous gift of nature, but is imbued with a recognition that we "ought" to stand out against temptations to be cowardly. And, finally, in the case of character, or the specific forms which in the virtues character takes, there would seem ground for saying *absolutely* that it ought to be. Beauty is a very pervasive good; but occasions arise when it ought to take second place. It seems proper to say however that we ought *always* to be just, since justice is a necessary condition of avoiding the feeling of disapprobation.

CHAPTER IV

THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE MORAL JUDGMENT

Objectivity.—Before leaving the analysis of the ethical judgment, there is one general character that attaches to it which calls perhaps for a somewhat fuller explanation. It is a fact that the judgment undoubtedly in some sense, as Kant insisted, claims objectivity and universality. If however, as I have been maintaining, the ought and goodness are both dependent on the presence of feeling or emotion, the objection is likely to be made that we have failed to justify this objective character. It will be desirable therefore to turn back and reconsider the matter a little further from this particular point of view. And I shall take up the inquiry under two heads: First, what is it more exactly that we mean when we say that a given good is *really* good, and that I ought in consequence to adopt it whether or not I find myself so inclined? And, secondly, on what grounds can we extend this obligation to others also, and maintain that there are common moral demands upon all men alike?

We may approach the problem by asking, to begin with, what precisely the case against feeling appears to be, and why it should be held to vitiate the "objectivity" of the moral judgment. And there is reason to suppose that the objection is based to some extent upon a misunderstanding of the claim involved. "If ought," Mr. Rashdall for example urges, "means simply, I have a certain feeling of dislike, then when another man has a different feeling, or I have a different feeling at another time, there is no rational

ground on which either is to be preferred." Indeed there is no sense in saying that we "ought" to have a feeling which does not exist, if it is the bare existence of a feeling which constitutes the ought. Actually however the whole validity of ethics implies the truth of, not, I desire, but, I ought to desire; not, I feel, but, I ought to feel.

In considering this, I may first agree once more that it is perfectly true that the moral judgment does not say *that* a feeling exists; nor does it reduce itself to the mere occurrence of a feeling. But I have not intended to imply either of these things. The immediate sense of oughtness is indeed a particular fact of feeling. But "objectivity," as capable of rational justification, is not, on any defensible theory, guaranteed by the immediate sense of duty, which may point us on occasion very far astray. It does not lie in the recognition that a feeling *is*, but, for critical reflection at least, in the relation of an object to a feeling which it tends to evoke. That a desire is objectively good would mean then, on the present showing, that the world, including the facts of human nature in particular, is so constituted that a certain object tends persistently to call forth in me, when I contemplate it in a cool moment, a feeling of approval, whereas the contrary sort of thing calls up a feeling of disapproval, this feeling lending a new shade of significance to the objective situation, and conditioning a practical disposition to maintain the one object in existence and abolish the other.

Now wherein lies the ethical danger of such an account of the matter? Is it in the fact that an important aspect of the world is supposed to attach to the capacity in things for having an effect on human feelings? But this seems a mere prejudice. Of course if we start out by minimizing the worth or significance of human life in the universe, or by minimizing the significance, within human

life itself, of emotional as opposed to intellectual processes, we are bound to hold in contempt man, or the feelings in man. I shall not stop to argue this however, since it rests itself on an assumption rather than on argument. And setting it aside, I see only one clear meaning left to the claim that the ethical judgment is vitiated by being tied up to feeling—that feelings very easily change, and that morality in consequence is infected with the same impermanence and insecurity.

In such a criticism there is an element of truth, but also one of pure irrelevance. What is true is this, that there is nothing in feeling which gives infallibility to the ethical judgment. My feelings are liable to alter, and with them therefore my opinions as to what is good and bad. So too another man may have a different feeling from mine, and there is no authoritative judge to decide between us. But this is something which attaches to the moral experience itself, and is not incident to any particular theory about it. If we try to reduce the moral judgment to intellect we have just the same difficulty. Here also the plain fact is that moral ideas change, and that they differ with different persons; and no authority exists competent on *a priori* grounds to adjudicate conflicting claims. All that we can fairly demand is, first, that each man should have in experience the basis for a reasonable measure of confidence that his own private judgments are sound, so that motives for action will not be destroyed; and, secondly, that there should be in the larger processes of history, and the experience of the race, the means for gradually testing out competing ideals, and approving them by their permanent success.

But both these demands are quite compatible with a reasonable theory of feeling as constitutive in judgments of value. If indeed one insists that by feeling is meant bare

feeling, apart from any regard for the place it occupies in an intelligible world, naturally from this no rational principles can be derived. But in whatever is said of feeling, I am presupposing as a background what we know about feeling as a function of the human organism, with all its settled characteristics. And in its relation to such an organism there is all the chance that seems to be required for giving it stability and objective significance. We are not left with mere arbitrary feelings. If feeling is attached to permanent capacities of the human constitution, these are sufficient to give steadiness and assurance to our judgments, while also they represent an objective goal to the discovery of which the growing process of experience is directed. The judgment that a thing is good presupposes that it will really satisfy desire, which rests not on my approval merely, but on the nature of things; so that I can ask intelligibly whether it is after all *really* good—will actually have, that is, the effect which I anticipate when I give it my approval. It is not a question what feelings we shall choose to prefer. It is a question what *things* our feelings will *let* us prefer; the feelings are not left to our private whim, but to nature.

What accordingly is meant when we talk about a thing as *really* good, and set it over against transient and mistaken desire, is not that objective goodness is something different from the object of approval to which we started out by reducing it, but, simply, that on continued reflection, and further experience, we shall find it *retaining* our approval. The desirable, as distinct from the desired, is that which still stands up securely when we are most "reasonably" inclined. It is the thing which not only is desired, but which we see there is no sound reason we should *not* desire. Such a judgment always indeed contains a necessary element of faith. It is no arbitrary

faith, however, but is based on my objective knowledge of the world, and, in particular, of the determinate constitution of human nature, which stands in the background as the basis of all possible satisfaction, and so acts as a steadier and corrector of opinion.

The knowledge that ethical good is bound up with feeling does not undermine its objective character then, so long as our feeling still persists, and is dependent on conditions out from under our immediate control. But something more than this may now be added. To our natural mind, justified approval is felt to reveal a character of reality itself, not limited to the mere correctness of our anticipation of psychological consequences. It implies a confidence that the way things appeal to human nature is somehow fundamental and central in the ultimate structure of the universe. This is a demand which does not supply its own answer, and tell us just *how* such a universe will need to be conceived; the problem has to be turned over to metaphysics. But there is not the least reason for an *a priori* judgment that it cannot be solved in a way to validate, in essence, our natural assumption. The recognition of ethical objectivity in this deeper sense is encouraged in us, and perhaps in the first instance made possible, by the backing it gets from social agreement. But what we come to *mean* by objective is something more than the mere fact that men generally think this way; it refers us back to the nature of the world from which man springs. Without some measure of social agreement we should hardly feel very confident of being on the track of truth, because what is true vindicates itself by its power to produce general conviction. But at bottom the moral is better than the immoral not because men's opinions coincide; their opinions are led to coincide because the fact is so. It is true once more, and perhaps in special

measure, that when we claim objectivity for our beliefs about the intrinsic nature of the universe at large we are appealing to a faith which goes beyond the possibility of reasoned demonstration. But there is nothing in a dependence on feeling, so long as the feeling is rooted in persistent facts of human nature, to cast doubt upon this faith, or to make it fundamentally different from our faith that the world is truly and objectively ruled by causal law.

Accordingly the only difference left in principle between a theory of intellectualism and one of "emotionalism" is this, that the nature of the underlying constitution of the world which it is the business of the moral life to uncover is revealed to us, according to the one account, through intellectual perceptions of relationships among the objects of experience, whereas according to the other it is revealed by the capacity of a certain kind of situation, intelligibly grasped and contemplated, to arouse in us, by virtue of our given constitution, processes which determine our emotional and practical response. Which of these more accurately represents the facts connected with our value judgments must be left for analysis to decide; but both may be equally consistent with objectivity.

Universality.—It is obvious that in this final sense, at any rate, objectivity suggests, in some interpretation of the word, universality as well—the extension of the idea of genuine good from *my* nature to *man's* nature, and the demand that it shall exercise a general human compulsion. Empirically, however, there are certain additional difficulties here which need a separate consideration. And two things should be admitted unreservedly at the start, neither of which perhaps will be satisfactory to a certain thoroughgoing ideal of the universality of the good. In the first place, each individual has for himself

to be the judge of what is good, since this attests itself in terms of personal satisfaction. There is no authoritative standard in morality, and the dispute between moral ideals must to the end be left theoretically undecided. Naturally our moral preferences are not to be regarded as arbitrary and unreasoned. A man may have abundant reason for regarding his own as thoroughly rational, and as alone capable of introducing harmony into the ethical life. The trouble is not that all ideals are unreasonable, but that different men have different reasonable ideals—they disagree, that is, as to what is reasonable and what is not. This is a plain matter of fact; and being so, it leaves in practice the final decision to each man's personal judgment, and renders morality a democratic, and not an aristocratic or an autocratic concern.

But practically such a residual doubt makes very little difference indeed, any more than theoretical troubles about the law of causation bother the working scientist. I do not *believe* that the other man is right and I am wrong; and except as a suggestion of tolerance, I do not have ordinarily to pay much heed to the mere abstract possibility. And especially is this true of that weighty body of ethical belief where a practical consensus of opinion holds. There are some things so grounded in human experience, in general acceptance, in their consonance with the most fundamental principles on which we are accustomed successfully to order our lives, that any attempt to raise questions about them is bound to seem arbitrary and captious, and we can for the most part afford to ignore it, just as we no longer seriously debate witchcraft, or perpetual motion, or the location of the Lost Tribes. Naturally these judgments of "good sense" are themselves liable to be mistaken, and to brush aside too lightly the call for reconstructing moral ideas. But

this, again, only calls attention to the fact that no plain and undeviating path to moral truth exists.

In so far, then, as we find reason to accept the actual existence of common ideals, we are no more handicapped by the recognition that ideals are personal, than by the recognition in any other field that judgments are bound to be *our* judgments. We simply have to come to the best conclusion we can about the nature of a certain kind of fact, the fact being open to observation like any other. This fact is the constitution of human nature. Of course there is no one human nature absolutely the same everywhere. But unless there were a good deal in common to different men, it would be impossible to speak of a common morality; and that there is a good deal in common in what men want, and in what they approve and condemn, is to be accepted merely because it is so.

Meanwhile it is not in connection with the elements common to different men, but with the differences, the points at which they depart from the common tradition, that the more serious difficulty for ethical theory arises. Suppose, as certainly is conceivable, that some men find their real satisfaction in ends which the more general moral judgment disapproves, and so that notions of the good remain permanently discordant; would not this be to deny universality, and leave moral standards uncertain? In a sense it would. Here is a man who, we will assume, actually finds his good in something which appeals to me as harmful and abhorrent. I have an immediate and strong disposition to condemn this as immoral; and yet have I a right to do so? If really he is acting upon his genuine nature, he is following out what for him is the good; and why should he be overborne by others who are differently constituted? Granting that he understands himself correctly, there seems no way of evading the impli-

cation; and I simply therefore should have to accept the fact that what commonly is called morality is not binding upon him. I cannot pronounce moral judgment on the man, in the sense of meaning that he ought not to desire the end he does desire. It is unintelligible to say that anybody ought to feel what there is no capacity in him for feeling. Of course if I believe that the capacity is there, then, "You ought not to like this," is an appeal to the man to search his own heart, and see whether he too will not on reflection come to see the matter as I do, under penalty, otherwise, of mistaking his own best good. "You ought," in other words, means, "You will regret it if you don't." And wherever a man finds himself fundamentally out of harmony with mankind, the chances are of course vastly in favor of the supposition that he has not yet dug down to his inmost nature. But on the supposition that it is genuinely so that a given man has unalterably the instincts, say, of the tiger or the pig, I should cease to say that he ought to feel differently; just as, if I am sensible, I do not blame the real pig for his tastes, but leave him to his own conscience and his Maker.

But such qualifications lose most of their importance in view of two facts. One is the fact that it is only in exceptional cases that the difficulty appeals to us in real life. Minor differences of nature impose to an extent different duties on different men; but we all recognize this in practice, and recognize it as harmless. It is entirely consistent with a substantial identity of moral judgment. In rare cases, indeed, cases of the moral pervert, we may be led in theory to admit exceptions to the universality of the moral rule. But this, again, merely admits that the absence of essential qualities in a being in the shape of man puts him outside the class of men for particular purposes, and leads us to qualify our judgment in the

same way we have long agreed to qualify judgments on the insane. If a man is without the rudiments of pity, or of a sense of fairness, or of self-respect, he *is* morally insane, and we cannot say that "ought" has any meaning for him.

On the other hand this does not alter of necessity the sort of *conduct* we are called upon to adopt toward such a man. And it does not even prevent us logically from calling him a bad man, in the sense in which this implies, not that he is failing in his "duty," but only that he falls under the dislike of normal men. If his ends do really seem to me hateful I have a perfect right to judge them bad; indeed I cannot help doing so, since to be an object of disapproval *is* to be judged bad. The fact that he cannot change his nature does not hinder me from calling the man who likes this particular sort of thing as detestable as I please, or from taking whatever measures the circumstances justify for suppressing him. And I still can say that a man "ought" to have those instincts of decency and humanity that belong to manhood; though all I intend by this is, that a specimen of a class must come reasonably near to the standard of the class if it is not to excite disapproval as a poor specimen.

CHAPTER V

RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM

Responsibility.—It perhaps would be possible without serious loss to stop at this point the analysis of the basic ethical concepts, since the gist of the matter is now before us. Nevertheless there is one further term which has played too large a part in the history of ethics to be entirely neglected. This is the idea of freedom, or free will. The motive for much of the traditional interest in freedom is a theological rather than a strictly ethical one. It is mixed up with the question of the relationship of God to man, and the reconciliation of man's responsibility with God's omnipotence. However it is also true that responsibility, to the safeguarding of which a theory of freedom has mainly been directed, has an ethical importance as well. Evidently, unless in *some* sense a man is responsible for his actions, the significance of the ethical life is bound to suffer and perhaps disappear.

But the course of ethical discussion has made it evident that responsibility in the ethical sense is possible also under a theory of determinism as well as of free will. If we ask what is meant in practice by responsibility, we find it reducing to the demand that men should possess a character such that we can deal with them rationally, and with a well-grounded expectation that their conduct is going to be, not arbitrary and incalculable, but amenable to common and reasonable motives. In a word, it means that we shall be able effectively to *hold them responsible.* An irresponsible person is one who, like an idiot or a luna-

tic, will not recognize plain facts, and is impervious to sane argument. You cannot hold him responsible simply because the attempt will not work; he goes ahead as his whim or his fixed idea suggests, without reference to the motives that govern normal men. And it has often been argued that *only* on a deterministic theory can a man be held responsible, since if there are no necessary causal laws at work in conduct, if a given reason brought to bear upon a determinate nature still leaves it equally free to move in either direction, all ground for confidence in dealing with men disappears.

So far then as the vindicating of responsibility is concerned, one might feel justified in avoiding an extended discussion of freedom as an ethical presupposition. Quite recently however the problem has taken a somewhat novel turn; and since this has a bearing on the more general implications of the point of view I have been adopting, it seems desirable to add a few rather tentative considerations.

The Motives for Indeterminism.—The argument about "free will"—by which I shall at least intend to mean something different from the "freedom" of the self-deterministS—is complicated at the start by a difficulty in defining the term clearly enough to locate the exact point at issue. It is not very satisfactory to say, for example, that free will is action apart from causes or motives, though frequently this seems to be implied. Such a phrase might equally stand for the purely irrational; and no philosopher would really wish to identify the ethical with the irrational. Accordingly defenders of free will have often evaded formal definition, and have referred us to experience if we would know what the concept actually means. However, they largely agree that it is describable as *not* one thing in particular. A "free" act is one not

to be wholly accounted for in terms of the facts that precede it in point of time; so that if a man were fully aware of all of these, he still would not be in a position to predict it absolutely.

But when he takes such a stand, the indeterminist finds himself at once engaged with formidable antagonists. Science has been held to say just this, that every event whatsoever in the world must be the determinate outcome of past events. The traditional ideal of science is represented by the concept of a universal thinker who, placed in perfect possession of all the facts up to date, can look ahead and see the entire future unroll with unfailing certainty. And if the claims of indeterminism nevertheless still persist in the minds of supposedly reasonable men, some explanation seems to be required. Why should any one still hesitate to yield unconditionally to the "scientific" ideal? What motives account for the stubborn claim that he is free?

As I try to analyze my own state of mind here—assuming that it is not exceptional—I find that I do detect a natural prejudice against this notion that anyone could even conceivably be in a position to predict with scientific certainty my future conduct. Apparently it renders me only a cog in the mechanism of the world; and I want to conceive of myself as a creative cause as well, not a mere meeting point of forces. Moreover, this attitude is not the expression of a purely personal demand. It involves philosophical presuppositions of a more general sort. The typical philosophy of science, with all its talk about evolution, has been in a real sense anti-evolutionary. What it calls evolution is only the shifting of unchanging elements in a more or less continuous direction; by no chance does genuine novelty ever come into existence. To "explain" a thing means, indeed, to show that it is *not*

new, but can be reduced to what already is familiar. Of late however there has been growing up in the philosophical world an antipathy to this whole way of looking at the universe, and a refusal to acquiesce in the notion of playing a game of which the outcome is cut and dried. And the same demand has almost always been the form our practical interest in life assumes. To the average man a genuine belief that there is nothing new under the sun, that all that is to come is just the exposition of a finished scheme, that he himself is only an illustrative detail of general laws and not an individual creative force, would prove inexpressibly boring.

And if it is said that nevertheless the facts are so, and no dissatisfaction of ours can change them, the answer is that what unquestionably is so is not the facts, but a certain theory of the facts, which may possibly be a misapprehension. The facts *seem* to be quite otherwise. Especially when we pass from the physical realm to that of conscious experience, there appears to be no trouble in verifying the claim that a scientific explanation may fail to eliminate novelty from the world. I have at a given moment a sensation of sweetness or of pain—a transient and elusive fact of which nevertheless I can be as sure as it is possible for me to be of anything. Science may undertake to account for this by pointing to the specific conditions under which the pain feeling arises; and these conditions may be reducible to a set of terms already familiar. But *that which happens* is not so reducible. The actual felt painfulness is something which, until it actually had been experienced, no one could by any possibility have looked forward to even had his knowledge of physiology been ideally complete. Furthermore the sensation is, from the standpoint of biology, not only a new kind of fact; each instance of the sensation is an addition

to the sum of existences. It is not, like an "atom," supposed to be there all the time, and to change only in its associates or in spatial position. It was *not*, it is, and presently it will pass away again. And that there are permanent underlying conditions which science tries to discover as a way of explaining new facts hardly goes to show that there are no new facts to explain.

There is a second point, standing for a source of the desire to feel oneself free, which has a still closer connection with the ethical experience. Science is inclined to reduce the causes that explain an act wholly to physical conditions; whereas men generally will hardly be satisfied unless they can believe that *intelligence* is an actual determinant of conduct. If our inner life is not to lose its significance, the fact must be, as it clearly seems to be, that the conscious presentation to ourselves of ends, and the reconstruction which these get "in the mind" prior to action, may enter genuinely into the explanation of the resultant deed. In connection with this conscious deliberation there are always modifications of neural process that exemplify physical law. But to stop here would be to change entirely what people ordinarily mean by action directed by intelligence. If the immediate awareness of the situation—a thing that can be distinguished from any conceivable brain process—is made simply a sign or accompaniment of the latter, and to the neural fact all the effective work is assigned, this is, in everyday language, to be a mechanism, and not a self-determining agent at all. What naturally we find ourselves believing is that the intelligent awareness itself, as a valuing activity, makes by its presence the action different from what otherwise it would have been. It is unquestionable that men thus feel their conscious and intelligent thought partly responsible for the direction taken by their lives;

the notion that the work is really all done for them behind the scenes they instinctively reject, and find more or less repulsive.

Indeterminism and Science.—So long, then, as we take the situation at its face value, and do not assume the falsity of the apparent facts under the influence of a speculative and, as a matter of fact, unverifiable scientific construction, we shall find ourselves naturally believing that life is, at its best, a creative achievement which actually adds in unlooked-for ways to the sum and the value of existence; and that our instrument for this is to be found in those ideal anticipations of the future in which the forward-looking side of human nature takes shape, under the guidance of a rational deliberation from which new insight and new action emerge. Meanwhile is there really anything in this that contradicts science and its presuppositions? Does science lend itself necessarily to a "closed system" ideal, or is it capable of acquiescing in a world in which real novelties appear? Are the returns, in theory, all in at the start, or does the universe really grow? If we admit the appearance of a new fact incapable of being scientifically deduced from a former state of the world, are we giving up the chance of explaining it, and so introducing an element of irrationality into the universe?

Of course if the recognition of novelty does really mean giving up science and reason, novelty, it is to be presumed, will have to go. But one should first make sure there is no other alternative. And instead of abandoning the novel because it is irrational, it might be possible to retain it, and revise our notion of what reason demands. If reason and science are to be identified with the possibility of finding the total nature of the new in the old, of reducing the strange without remainder to the familiar, of show-

ing that at each advancing stage of the world there is really nothing present that a sufficiently inclusive knowledge would not have found in the preceding stages, then to suppose real novelty is to suppose the irrational by definition. But it is not evident that this is what science means. As a matter of fact it might seem to be going back to a conception which the working scientist has largely discarded. What "determinism" suggests as somehow essential to the situation is that notion of a necessary causal bond, a rigid constraining of the new moment by the preceding one, which so far back as Hume came in for a destructive criticism. Actually the aim of science is, of course, nothing but the discovery of law. All that a "rational" world presupposes is that things are not chaotic and independable, but orderly; given determinate conditions, and a specific pattern of reality discloses itself in the outcome. Our faith in reason fortifies us against the thought, which would make of things an intellectual nightmare, that under identical conditions at another time a different pattern might be revealed. The future is predictable, therefore, in the sense that in so far as we have reason to believe that the conditions *are* the same, we have confidence that things are going to work along familiar lines.

But prediction may be limited in two ways. In the first place, since situations never do exactly repeat themselves, we have always in practice to deal with probabilities. A scientific law is a scheme of abstract relationships which we hold before the mind to help us to simplify a complex situation, and so increase our chance of guessing right, rather than an infallible rule for anticipating the future. Empirically the scientist never can be sure that things are coming out just as he expects, even in the most artificially limited experiment, since he can never control

conditions fully. And when it is out of his power to arrange the circumstances experimentally, as in history and human action generally, his prophecies, as every one can see, are crude approximations, and often no better than wild guesses. Here the source of the limitation is man's necessary ignorance.

But also there is another possible limitation to the powers of prediction. The uniformity of action under assigned conditions does not require that we should be able to anticipate what the character of the law-abiding action is to be prior to the actual appearance of the conditions, and our acquaintance with the results. *Perhaps* we can deduce it from the laws we have discovered in simpler situations; but then again, perhaps we cannot. This has to be left for experience to say. And whatever the answer, the intelligibility of the world still remains. When physical elements for example are brought into certain determinate relationships a new chemical reaction will appear. This reaction has a specific character and order, which can be counted on whenever the conditions are repeated. But it does not follow that there was any way of telling, ahead of experience, what the chemical event was going to turn out to be, even had we possessed the completest possible knowledge of the way matter works in non-chemical situations. Scientists have usually liked to believe that from the simple laws of mechanics, say, all other laws can conceivably be determined; they are simply expressions of mechanical law in varying degrees of complication. But science has never professed actually to have done this; nor is there any *a priori* reason requiring us to suppose that the ideal is a valid one. It might equally so far as we can see be true, as it clearly appears to be true, that at a certain stage of complication things suddenly begin to act in new ways, incapable of derivation

by any feat of ingenuity from the laws that represent their previous behavior under different conditions. And in such a case, with no disrespect to science, we should have an unpredictable novelty in the world. Of course we can say that the new chemical reaction must already have had its ground of possibility in reality before it revealed itself. Naturally nothing can happen unless it is possible for it to happen. But this is not a "scientific" statement. Scientifically the only meaning to the claim that the present is a necessary outcome of the past is the possibility of deriving it from the laws of reality in its earlier expressions; and this by hypothesis cannot here be done.

It would theoretically seem possible, then, to accept in this sense the indeterminism of the ethical act without being forced to regard it as irrational. It *is* rational, because conduct reveals in itself an orderly and intelligible character. But if, as is at least conceivable, human life is an expression of a genuinely *growing* universe, if reason-directed action is a way in which reality comes to a head and defines itself in a new situation, it also might follow that it is unpredictable from the laws of physical life, or from the psychological law of mere natural impulse. It may be that the presence of an intelligent realization of ends is just the condition leading to a novel reaction, whose own law—for of course it has a law—is to be found not by deduction from the simpler laws that precede, but empirically by looking to see what the new consequences are. It might turn out that the apparent truth is the real truth also—the apparent truth being that the process of rational deliberation represents the focussing point of growth after a fashion creative of new law and new fact, instead of being the outcome of old law and fact. Ultimately we may be justified in believing that what seems

to be the case in human achievement and purposive action is *really* constitutive of reality, and not an illusion gracefully concealing the wheels and pinions of the machinery that actually does the work.

We are not in this, once more, substituting chance for intelligibility. The artist who creates a work of art does not feel that it is arbitrary. It is indeed *inevitable*, the only outcome artistically conceivable. But it gets its quality of inevitableness not from what precedes—marble and language have no inevitable push toward a statue or a poem—but in terms of the idea which lay ahead, the artistic goal. It is necessary as the one satisfying solution of a problem which was not solved until the artist *created* the solution, although the preceding *conditions* of a true solution render the outcome, when it appears, a rational or intelligible fact. My act could thus be predicted only as the would-be prophet ceases to work with logical tools, and becomes himself a creator, putting himself imaginatively in my place, and feeling his way to the same new fact. And to the thought that through sympathetic intuition another man may thus divine my decision, there is no such objection as that which I feel when the process is conceived in terms of reasoning, or scientific prediction.

CHAPTER VI

PRINCIPLES IN ETHICS

The Nature of Principles.—So far, apart from certain anticipations in the preceding chapter, there has been occasion chiefly to dwell upon the facts of impulse and of feeling; and the general thesis has been that the origin of moral judgments, and the final source of the confidence a man may feel that his own intuitions of value are justified, are to be located not in reason, but in other and prerational factors of experience. However important the part reason has to play, it is not its work to set ultimately the ends of conduct and supply their raw material; and any attempt to give to it a primary rôle will result in turning ethical principles into abstractions, that have no virtue in them for the actual guidance of human life.

When one turns however to the education or development of the ethical experience, the emphasis will need to be differently placed. Always in the background the possibilities of feeling have to be presupposed. But on the whole it seems probable that the distinction between a coarse, and a refined and sensitive conscience, lies less in native differences of feeling capacity than in the nicety of our insight into circumstances and conditions. What we call refinement of feeling is in large measure refinement of perception; goodness is hardly separable from a certain moral tact, a sympathetic sensitiveness to niceties of quality and conduct overlooked by cruder judgments. There may indeed be a blundering sort of goodness apart from a sympathetic moral understanding; but we show

our feeling for its very inferior moral quality by our disposition to apologize for it.

Briefly, then, moral development consists primarily in the growth of a capacity to perceive in a situation those elements fitted to call forth the appropriate feeling. Badness is more often than not stupidity. To take a common sort of instance, much dishonesty and cruelty is due in the first place to the ability to overlook the similarity of the case in hand to others in which our readiness to react more sympathetically is successful in inhibiting the claims of selfish interest. And progress lies not so much in strengthening the feeling of sympathy—this may already be strong enough where it is actually called forth, as is indicated by the ease with which even a hardened audience can be worked up over some fictitious case presented vividly on the stage—as in cultivating the capacity to see the occasion for sympathy in a wider range of situations. Superiority in moral insight thus depends mainly upon a superior moral responsiveness to those shades of a situation calculated to evoke the inhibitive impulses and feelings. The callous man, on the other hand, is the man who acts to a morally irrelevant part of the situation. The unscrupulous business man admires himself for his business acumen—a thing admirable enough in itself—but he fails to note how inadequate an account it gives of the total fact.

What is needed then in order to conclude the present analysis is to ask in what general form reason can be applied to the ethical life as a source of principles to guide us in the search for our best good. A principle, we may note, is not identical with a command or rule, which prescribes categorically a course of action without reference to the reasons which justify it. And it is something more, too, than a mere generalization, fact, or truth.

Every principle rests indeed on a foundation of fact; and it is necessary to emphasize this in order to repudiate, again, the notion that in reason we have an immediate intuition of absolute ends. However universal its pronouncement about the supreme moral good or duty may turn out to be, reason is never fundamental and self-supporting. Take any formula that has been proposed as a starting point for ethics—the proposition that we ought to be reasonable, or that we ought to lead a unified life, or that we ought to work for the general good. Of each of these, as purely intellectual propositions, it is legitimate to ask the question, *Why* ought we? We reach no resting place till we get hold of something that is not a rational intuition, or a principle, but a fact. And since the fact can hardly be that we *are* always reasonable, or always unified, or that we always act for the general good, the ultimate thing we are left with is the *fact of approval*, as an empirical expression of human nature. Unless we found ourselves—for no one can tell *why* human nature is of this sort rather than another, or indeed *why* it is at all—so constituted that some things are pronounced good by us and others not so good, no ideal, or principle, or guiding insight would be possible. And this fact of approval, again, is only one aspect of that larger fact of the human constitution, which we accept on the strength of the established convergence of common sense and science. But to get anything we can call a principle, we have to go further. A principle always implies, as well, a connection with human practice; it is a general truth which can be *used* to suggest to us what we ought to do. Accordingly if we are to be sure what we are after in the search for ethical principles, it is well to translate the problem into these specific terms: Granting the existence of human nature and its wants, can we point out anything as in

general *necessary* to the attainment of those ends which man will find himself permanently approving?

It will be noticed that the possibility of such necessary principles is supplied, without going outside the limits of an empirical view of the world, by the peculiar nature of the fact on which they rest. It has always been objected by rationalists in philosophy that out of experience nothing universal can arise; at most all we can get from an examination of fact is that this is the way things always have been in every instance we have examined in the past. And in the ultimate sense such a claim must be allowed. If human nature were to change fundamentally, the principles stating what now is necessary to its satisfaction would no longer hold for man. We have to start with man's constitution as we find it, empirical and contingent. But this does not interfere with the possibility of real principles dealing with the ethically best, because "best" is for us a word explicitly relative to man as he is. And we are freed from the uncertainty of mere empiricism, simply because our supposed necessity attaches not to a generalization of events and instances, but to the necessary connection between a want or group of wants and the known conditions of their satisfaction. Granting both the existence of desire and the world in which it tries to get expression—and both these things are facts that are practically assured—we can anticipate further experience, and say generally, not only that men have commonly done so and so, but that so and so *must* be done. And the necessity remains whether or not men *have* done this in the past. This is, to be sure, in the end hypothetical necessity only. But since none of us have any vital interest in inquiring what we should need to do if we were apes or angels, the principles practically, though not theoretically, remain absolute.

The Definition of "Life."—Before asking however the general source and nature of such principles, I should like to go back from a slightly different standpoint to the basic fact which principles of guidance presuppose. In scientific language this is, once again, the biological organism with its mechanism of instinct. These however are not the terms in which life presents itself to the natural man when he is actually engaged in living it. The ordinary person does not think much about his instincts, even if he can be supposed to know that he has them. And it will be useful, in order to avoid ambiguities as we proceed, to inquire what is the translation of this scientific fact into more familiar human discourse. What does life actually mean to the man who is not concerned to describe it scientifically, but who tries simply to express what in a practical way he is doing as he goes about his daily business? Such a statement, it should be noted clearly, would be concerned not with what men *ought* to do, but with what they *do* do; it is not yet a "principle." And it follows that it would give as such no answer to the ethical problem. It would not tell us what constitutes the *best* life; within its confines room would have to be found for a variety of alternative careers, for choosing between which principles would then come in.

The value of dealing with this preliminary definition first lies in a temptation on the part of ethical philosophers to confuse the question of fact with that of ethical norm or standard, and to suppose that they are furnishing a guide to life when their real task is still before them. A number of the phrases which philosophers have used to describe the end of human conduct, or the *summum bonum*, are in reality no more than attempts in this sense at a description of the *de facto* end identifiable with the character of life as such; they are blanket terms that do not

by themselves give us any practical directions about the road we ought to take for the attainment of the best. Thus even if it were the case that what every human being is really after is to secure his own pleasure, we should still have the ethical problem on our hands; what *kinds* of pleasure are we to select if the end is to be successfully attained? The same thing can be said about the most prominent modern rival of the pleasure theory. In every act that satisfies an impulse—and I am not likely to indulge in actions that do not—I am in so far "realizing" myself; and it is just as necessary to give me a guide among the various forms of self-realization as among the various forms of pleasure.

Of the formulas that may be supposed to offer a description of the character of life, that of pleasure is historically the most widespread; but in view of what already has been said about hedonism it is unnecessary to consider its claims any further. All men, at one time or another, set pleasure among their aims of conduct; some men, it may be, make it the one rule of life. But that the normal mind reckons life only as a means to the gratification of its private feelings is simply not the case. In instructed circles a different type of formula is now therefore chiefly current, pointing back in one form or other to that scientific fact which traditional hedonism failed to take sufficiently into account—the biological life with its predisposed mechanism.

The first way of putting the matter which this suggests is that we stick to the biological fact in its lowest terms, and interpret life in accordance with the scientific notion of "self-preservation." And such a formula has indeed enjoyed a considerable vogue, owing to the wide popular influence of science, and the apparent simplicity of the formula itself. It is too simple however, and too bare of

content, to stand any chance of justifying itself to impartial inspection. To hold, with Hobbes, that men actually regard the preservation of themselves in existence as the one self-evident goal never to be lost sight of, is to be blind to the greater part of human experience. It gives no heed to the deep-lying recklessness of human nature, its fondness for taking a sporting chance; and it is quite inconsistent with intentional self-sacrifice. Nor is science unaware of this; and if biological preservation is its watchword, at least it is not self-preservation, but the preservation of the race. But this only brings into relief the fact that life is more than biology. It may be so that, keeping to the purely animal plane, "nature" is only interested in keeping the species alive, though the statement seems more poetic than scientific. It may even be that for themselves men *ought* to make this their sole aim. But that men do *not* make it their comprehensive definition of living is open to no doubt at all.

A more ethically significant form in which the same general point of view has frequently issued has already been referred to. This is the formula of self-realization. It may be admitted that this phrase gives an account, and a fairly true account, of the psychological situation we are taking as a starting point, just as preservation perhaps does of the biological situation. Life *is* as a matter of fact the expression or realization of the self, as a center of potencies and impulses to action. The word does not to be sure call explicit attention to the other side of the matter—the pleasurableness of the activity—which is essential to the notion of its goodness. But this aspect may perhaps be taken as assumed. And in any case the emphasis is one degree more ultimate than the emphasis present in the pleasure formula. The same objection can however be brought against self-realization that was seen

to apply to pleasure; self-realization is not, any more than pleasure, the thing at which most people consciously aim. Some of them indeed do. There are men for whom their own self-development constitutes the conscious end and motive. But this is enough to eliminate the term for our present purpose; in so far as self-realization represents one particular type or ideal of living among others, it is not a blanket term to apply to life generally. And it is open to another stricture, too, which its upholders bring against the hedonist; to take an interest solely in my own growth, my own development, is a subtler form of selfishness, and is calculated to arouse in the impartial mind a sentiment of condemnation.

Somewhat closer to the biological formula of self-preservation, but more easily capable of being enlarged to take in the spiritual aspects of experience, is another phrase which has played a conspicuous part in recent writings. If we translate into less literal terms that assertion of oneself, in the form of superiority over one's surroundings, which self-preservation seems to imply, we might be led to think of experience as a striving after *power*—the consciousness of dominating the conditions of our life. Such a mode of expression, congenial alike to a popularized theory of evolution and to the natural human fondness for self-glorification, has been taken up and given vogue by a number of philosophic and semi-philosophic writers. That such a will to power may, in an aggressive personality, be consciously chosen as the highest good, history sufficiently shows; the military conqueror, the industrial magnate, the political demagogue, all may exemplify it. But to extend the title to cover dissentient ideals also, though for literary purposes it may prove effective, is open to certain obvious objections. Turned inward, the ideal would mean that what men are after is a merely

subjective result again—the enjoyment of the exercise of power; and this is only a narrow form of the pleasure philosophy. Directed outward in order to escape this subjective taint, it gains objectivity, but at the expense of concreteness and definiteness. Men do not in any ordinary sense of the word simply want power. They want a variety of things in particular, of which power constitutes qualitatively only one of many characteristics. And while it is doubtless true that all of them involve energizing in some degree, it does not follow that this necessary condition can adequately describe the concrete outcome men are after.

Perhaps in view of the difficulty in describing life, it might after all be left as its own interpreter. And indeed we know quite well what living means if we do not try to put it into words. But there remains one simple and unambitious formula which seems to me fairly successful in conveying this meaning, and which I shall find it convenient to use, and to presuppose in the subsequent discussion. Life, namely, means *doing things that we find interesting and important.* A common defect in most of the preceding definitions is that they suppose the eye turned inward to the self; whereas it is definitely characteristic of a normal and healthy notion of life that it should be disinterested and outward-looking. The self is indeed taken for granted. Its needs and their satisfaction are involved. But it is essential to a natural view that interest and attention should be directed to things rather than to feelings, to a "career" rather than to myself. The formula accordingly that life means normally an absorption in interesting and satisfying tasks is intended to call attention to three things in particular. First, life consists in *activity,* in *doing* something. Secondly, as a necessary implication of this, what the activ-

ity shall be is determined by the concrete impulsive nature of the individual man; and its guarantee and reward is the satisfaction that accompanies the expression of impulse. It is in this sense that life *is* self-realization, though it is not *thought* of as such; the "losing oneself in one's work" is the very condition of successful self-realization. And, finally, impulse carries as a part of its meaning the consequence that our conscious attention has normally to be directed not to the self, nor to the fact or feeling of satisfaction, but to the objective conditions which render the act possible, and to the outcome of the act as a creative accomplishment.

I shall stop for a moment on this last point. Not only does it represent empirically a fact in the ethical experience, but we can see roughly why it must be so. Once grant that life is made up of active impulses endeavoring to express themselves in a determinate environment, and consciousness *has* to be outward looking. The self-absorbed man will be the unsuccessful man. It is objective intelligence first of all that is called for; we need to give our best attention alike to the conditions to be mastered—or they will master us—and to the ultimate issue, or we shall lose our path. And for contemplation also, as well as for the process of active effort, there are empirical reasons why the objective emphasis should still rule. Constituted as we are, we can get lasting satisfaction only as the results of our work are sources of admiration and contemplative approval; and for this we need to look beyond our own feelings, or our own admirable characters even. It is true that it is *my* satisfaction that lends to objects their flavor of desirability, and *my* effort and achievement that constitute work an end for me. It is true, also, that the normal man has now and again to envisage the personal side of his activity, dwell in his

mind upon the work as *his*, and look forward to the pleasant things it will bring him, in order to keep motivation sufficiently vigorous and tense. But when the need for this becomes more than incidental, it argues something wrong with the machinery of impulse.

Indeed it is a commonplace that the man who is always anticipating the pleasant results to come, instead of being absorbed in the interestingness of the task, is very apt to find himself disappointed. The stronger the impulse on which satisfaction depends, the less we have to coax this along by thoughts about the relation of the work to *us*. This is in part the explanation of the "hedonistic paradox." If pleasure depends on wants seeking an outlet, then the more vigorous the wants the greater the attendant satisfaction. But the man who wants something very much does not have to look about him with the mere desire for pleasure in his mind; the direction of his quest is already determined. He wants to go fishing, or to read a book, or to paint a picture; and the strength of the want is his guarantee that he will find the occupation satisfying. If on the contrary he has to sit down and ask himself, How can I spend the afternoon most pleasantly? this means that there is nothing in particular that he wants very much to do. He is already rather bored; and it is not likely that in such a case he will get much satisfaction, no matter what he chooses.

The Classification of Principles.—However, supposing that we are willing to agree that a search for congenial tasks is an accurate and fairly adequate transcription of the end we set before us in living, our main work has just begun. What, we have still to ask, constitutes a congenial task? What kind of work in particular carries with it our settled sense of approval, so that we pronounce it really and permanently, and not just "apparently"

good? Are there any general truths or principles here to be discovered on scrutiny which will guide us in our actual quest, or are we left wholly to chance and the rule of thumb?

If an ethical principle is a statement about what it is necessary to do in order to be able to lead a satisfying life, we shall discover such principles, not in the realm of "self-evident truths," but by looking to the facts of experience and trying to find out what these actually have to say about the possibilities of successful living. And the most natural way to classify principles would therefore be in terms of the kind of fact to which we are appealing. There are three general sorts of relevant facts. First, there are the purely *formal* conditions which success involves—the abstract *methods*, that is, which a human being has to follow if he is to get a chance at concrete satisfaction. Secondly, there are the *external* conditions he is bound to take into account, since life involves not only desire and interest, but the surroundings under which interests have to get their fulfillment. And, thirdly, there are the *inner* conditions, in terms of the concrete potentialities of man's nature, which set the lines along which satisfaction is possible.

The first or formal principles are of two general sorts, both obvious enough to need no extended discussion. It is evident to begin with that, considering the sort of being man is, a successful life must be a *rational* life. It must not, that is, be merely impulsive and haphazard, but must submit impulse to rational reflection, and act only after an impartial scrutiny alike of the outer facts, and of the relative value of aims and ideals such as comes from deliberate self knowledge. It is well to note once more that the maxim, Be rational, does not of itself tell us in the least *what* is rational. As a principle it is purely formal,

and no one but the abstract thinker, concerned less with life itself than with its scientific technique, would be likely to suppose that it covers our ethical needs. But as a formal precondition to any such discovery of the best life it is quite indispensable.

As the first formal principle, or set of principles, attaches to the intellect as a tool of the good life, so the second attaches to the will. If no man can reasonably expect success unless he puts his mind to the business, so no man can look to getting what he wants apart from certain qualities of will. The world is not a place where feebleness, vacillation, laziness, are tolerated; this is something we can lay down *a priori* and universally. A precondition of satisfaction, and even, in almost every case, of avoiding disaster, is a certain capacity for effort, and a steady loyalty to the course of conduct which reason and self-interest have laid down.

Bringing us nearer to the concrete facts of living is the second group of principles, which come from the nature of the world that reason is compelled to recognize. They most of them fall again into two main groups. On the one hand are the demands of biological well-being. It is so nearly always the case that it may practically be made a rule, that a satisfied life requires a foundation of bodily health and vigor. Save for very exceptional reasons, therefore, a plan of life which ignores the primary demands of the body, leads to ill-health or a constant overdrain of energy, encourages low spirits and depression, is a plan which we can say beforehand is not going to work out well in practice. A man who, so far as it lies humanly within his power, does not as a regular thing wake up in the morning refreshed and feeling fit to tackle the day's job, cannot flatter himself that as a human being he is a success.

The second most general sort of external condition which enlightened self-interest has to take into account is the social fact—the nature and disposition of our fellows. So long as happiness depends so largely as it does upon the way in which other men behave toward us, one who ignores this in his plans, and sets out as if he had only his own interests to consult, is throwing away his chances foolishly. Human nature shows certain permanent and objective traits which we are compelled to keep in view unless we want trouble; quite apart from any question of altruism or ideal justice, our welfare depends on recognizing the common human sentiments and motives, and adjusting our actions accordingly. If we injure others they will be resentful and try to pay us back; if we are proud and disdainful they will dislike and speak ill of us; if we treat them with a show of consideration we shall be more likely to get out of them what we want. Such facts are familiar to everyone, and in view of them we are often able to lay down with practical universality various principles of conduct. So long as men live in society they *cannot* go to work to attain their ends along lines which ignore the wishes and opinions of other men, and expect to get away with it.

Meanwhile such principles are still as yet not constitutive in any large measure of the good life; and what we are most anxious to discover is this actual content of the ends of living. Along what lines of effort and activity, positive and concrete, can we hope to find the satisfied life. It is here that it becomes less easy to lay down principles that hold with anything like universality.

The Principle of Objective Value.—In order to clear the ground, I shall turn to begin with to two possible theories about the positive content of the good life, both of which I shall find occasion to question. The first is the

very plausible claim which sets out to find the governing principle of the moral life in terms of purely objective good. It has often appeared to philosophers and to moral enthusiasts alike, that the thing we ought to do, the life we ought to aim to live, is that which shall realize in the world the greatest possible quantity of value. They have looked for a rule of life, not first of all in the demands of human nature, but in a quantitative calculation of those objects of approval that possess objective goodness. And the plausibility of this becomes most apparent in connection with our natural hesitation to give an affirmative answer to the question: Ought I to be content with anything short of the maximum of good within my power to produce? If I have a chance to create either more or less of good by my efforts, can I reconcile it with my conscience knowingly to choose the less?

Before starting to consider this, we should first make clear that we are not interpreting the thesis in a way to beg the question. Of course if by good we mean "morally" good, or that which "ought to be," we can hardly escape the conviction that that which has the greater claim on our duty we ought to do. But this is to empty the supposed principle of any practical meaning. As a practical guide what it needs to maintain is, that "natural" good, in its widest and most comprehensive sense, is capable of summation, and that our sense of duty arises only when we have completed the summation, and found on what side the maximum of natural good lies.

But when we keep the exact nature of this thesis in mind, it gives rise to various doubts. And the first and most obvious objection is, that it presents us with what on the practical side seems a hopeless task. How in the world are we ever going to find in the concrete an answer to the problem: Where lies the greatest amount of

objective good? It would be bad enough even were we all agreed on the comparison of various goods, and knew just how much weight ought to attach in our calculation to the creation of an object of beauty, say, as over against an equal effort spent in health-producing exercise, or in giving good advice to our friends—all of them supposedly goods of a sort. The mere quantitative complexity is itself enough to destroy any real chance of ever coming to a rational conclusion. To be certain that we had the *real* good in hand, and that no element had escaped us, we should have practically to exhaust the resources of the universe. Ethics, to be sure, need not set its demand quite so high as this. It might compromise by being content with such factors as the human mind could reasonably be expected to lay hold of. But even this would at each moment of choice set a painful and laborious task of calculation, which at least would be likely to prove fatal to the freshness and spontaneity of the moral life. Meanwhile the supposition that the factors, though numerous, are in themselves unambiguous, and that there is no particular difficulty in ranking simple goods, is of course quite contrary to fact. Not only do men fail to agree, but no man agrees with himself at all times; and often his judgment about the relative value of things is in the highest degree tentative and uncertain.

But there is a more fundamental defect in the method proposed. It is important, if we are ever to expect any definite guidance in the good life, and are not to be put off with abstractions, to emphasize the fact that the good is, up to a point, incurably specific and individual, and that no universal receipt is anywhere to be discovered. The sort of life which will satisfy me is not the sort that will satisfy you; and this difference of interest and temperament in men is the first thing to take into view when

we are pretending to deal with life in the concrete. One of the most serious defects of ethical thought has been its imperfect vision for the multiplicity of human ideals. In its sense for the urgent need of introducing unity and harmony into the ethical experience, it has tended to ignore the individual aspect which ideals must take on before they are fit to stand for anything that real human beings actually want. In this tendency it has been backed and abetted by one of the most universal of human failings. It is a late virtue in human history, acquired with much difficulty, to look with complacence on interests and types of life different from one's own. The principle, Live and let live, seldom has played any but a very modest rôle; the natural human disposition is to despise and hit out at preferences that do not fall in with one's personal or parochial notions. Indeed the intolerance is apt to be more pronounced in proportion as ideals are held more strongly and sincerely. The easygoing man of the world may be willing to grant the same indulgence to his neighbors that he claims for himself; but the idealist, the enthusiast, is more often than not so intrigued with his own more excellent way that he is impatient of a different valuation, even when he is not ready to set to work to make it practically as unpleasant as possible for those who show other preferences.

In view of the plain fact, then, that men are differently built, with a bent toward widely various kinds of work and interest, no rational principle can possibly tell us what sort of life in the concrete a man is suited to. The true fact lies below the surface of the rational consciousness, and can be discovered only by an experiment in living. Such experimenting every man has in the end to do for himself; and the result at which he arrives will be true only for himself, and not for his neighbors. This personal

element it is of the utmost importance that we carry constantly in mind as a limiting condition in the search for principles, if we are to expect results that in practice will be recognized by the common man as really throwing light on the course of his daily conduct, and that in theory steer clear of a despotism of the single ideal. Since there is usually a twist to our nature which makes a contented life more possible in some directions than in others, as well as limitations of talent and energy which determine what results for us are humanly possible, or possible only as we pass beyond the range of normally functioning energy, and succeed at the expense of strain, and overexertion, and their attendant ills, reason, if it is reasonable, will take account of these things. There are innumerable ways of accomplishing good in the world, with wide differences of quantitative result. And it is not reasonable to call upon any man to adjust his own life to these objective possibilities regardless of the sort of thing for which he is himself particularly fitted, his fitness being evidenced to himself in the end by the call he feels, and the assured content that comes to him in the process.

Such an insistence on individual liking as the primary determinant of the ideal will doubtless seem to some too little strenuous, and too indifferent to the lofty character of duty and the dominant claims of the good. It is always possible to bring about in oneself a feeling of unworthiness by contrasting the needs of the world with the actual achievements of any individual life, and so to leave an uneasy sense that we have no right to insist on personal claims to satisfaction. Such a feeling is a useful element in human nature for heightening the quality of experience, and spurring men to larger endeavor. But like any other human feeling it will, if we detach it from its instrumental service and hold it alone before the mind, get out

of perspective, and carry an emotional insistence which reason fails to justify. It is perhaps best answered by letting it have in imagination its way, and then asking whether the results appeal to our sense of approval. And when I ask, Does the life which in spite of achievement fails of permanent content and satisfaction in the career which it has chosen really justify itself to me as a good life, one that is successful and that has attained its end? I can only reply that it does not.

It is no doubt not unusual to hear it urged that only in a lifelong sacrifice of personal interests does true satisfaction lie. And that there are natures of which this may be so is very probable. The feeling of unworthiness sometimes becomes so abnormally acute as to spoil the most innocent forms of personal realization, and lead to a constant crucifixion of the natural desires. But this is obviously not true of mankind generally. And as against this we may note the frequent tendency of the moral judgment to condemn explicitly a notion of life which measures success in quantitative terms. One of the things that ethical wisdom is constantly called upon to combat is this belief that mere attainment, work done, going after results, is the true way of life, even though in themselves these results are what we commonly approve as good. Many men are plainly missing the good of life because they do not realize that their "success" is out of proportion to the amount of real satisfaction they have picked up on the way.

But still, it may be said, is there not in fact a value in achievement even apart from whether it makes the man who does the work happy in the doing? To be sure there is—for other people. But a theory which starts to find the clue to a successful life in its social effects can at least not universalize itself. What of these others who

enjoy the fruits of a man's unenjoying toils? Why should they have more enjoyment than he? And if they too are to sacrifice happiness in work to the creation of commodities for their neighbors, in the end everybody alike fails of satisfaction. But also there is an empirical answer which goes a long way toward rebutting such a claim—the fact that on the whole, and in the long run, it is very doubtful whether the sum total of goods is really increased by toil which is not the outcome of personal appreciation. Unless one is obsessed by the idea of pure quantity, he must recognize that a great deal of even conscientious work is done which the world would be quite as well off without. Quality, on the other hand, almost invariably comes from the man who is interested in his job.

And there is a further distinction which may help to quiet moralistic scruples. The distinction is that between our career in the large, in so far as we can aim at it with conscious deliberation and foresight, and the emergencies which, in a world like the present one, constantly intrude themselves upon us. These last do present themselves not seldom to our natural moral feeling as exceptions to the general principle of "living one's own life." When such occasions arise it often, to be sure, is possible to evade the responsibilities that would lead us into uncongenial fields, and to stick to the pleasanter paths to which our natural likings point us; and it is not necessary to pronounce upon the nature of what in such a case it is our duty to choose. This is indeed indeterminable except in view of the special circumstances of the particular situation. Frequently a wrong perspective makes such external claims seem far more important than they really are, and they ought not to be allowed to interfere with our fixed plans and to dissipate our lives. Many men, and perhaps more women, are led by the call of duty—which

often means no more than convention and popular expectation—to sacrifice for the mere name of service the very heart of personal good; we honor their conscientiousness, but it is difficult to respect their judgment. Probably a fair proportion of the distractions which tempt us from our personal aims are of this illusory nature. But certainly this is not true of all. And there will be little question that while we do not call upon people in the abstract to sacrifice to impersonal demands the interests which appeal to them individually, we do normally tend to despise the man who cannot on occasion, for due cause shown, subordinate his private scheme of life to some larger and less personally appealing cause. I doubt if there would be any general condemnation of the life of the recluse, for example. One who felt that for him the good was to be attained by withdrawing from the conflict of the world would not be regarded as of the highest human type; but he hardly would of necessity be morally despised. But a recluse who should persist in his seclusion when he might render important service to his friends or country would most certainly arouse in us a feeling of moral reprobation.

Situations the same in principle arise constantly in the course of the most normal living. The very commitment to a given line of conduct automatically gives rise to responsibilities which do not limit themselves to our prearranged plans. And when responsibilities are assumed, or imposed, we cannot judge the man who does not meet them with some regard to the relative importance of the interests involved, without a feeling of distaste. To sacrifice everything to the design of keeping his career safe would mark him out not only in the minds of others, but, in so far as he is a reasonable being, in his own mind, as indefensibly narrow and petty in his outlook. Here

lies the truth contained in the ethical principle, "my vocation and its duties." Such a principle is seriously defective in the form in which it has usually been defended, because it thinks of my "vocation" as settled for me. It minimizes the essential need that I should be enabled to choose my own vocation and adopt it freely, and so lends itself to a political and industrial conservatism But when we have once allowed that a vocation is something which ought itself to be determined from within, and that social arrangements should be directed to this end, there still remains a large field within which, if I am to be able to retain my self-respect, duty must help to shape my life as well as inclination; since a vocation, once assumed, can only be carried on in a world constantly presenting me with unwelcome alternatives, which however I can ignore only at the risk of feeling degraded in my own eyes. Nor is it possible of course ever to free oneself entirely from the coercion of circumstances even in the choice of a vocation at the start. A man is not born into a void. He finds himself at the very beginning in determinate surroundings, whose particularity is never likely to be wholly eliminated in the interests of social equality; and these are themselves among the things that create responsibilities to limit free guidance from within.

Circumstances may even at times be so compelling as in the end to sacrifice a man to his duties, and leave little room for the free play of his private will. A man of conscience born to high rank or vast wealth, and so made responsible for large interests in terms of possible human welfare, or one whom chance has shouldered with an enterprise which it then seems cowardly to desert, or who is conscious in himself of powers to meet some crisis for which no one else seems to have the ability or the will, may find it his duty to sacrifice those ends that really he is

eager for, and endure, in his vocation, the exactions of an uncongenial taskmaster. One might fairly be asked to test such an instance very carefully, and first make sure that he is not under the influence of the romantic illusion. It is not always that the facts bear out this assumption of a man's indispensableness; and it may very well be false pride, or an unacknowledged hankering after all for the perquisites of his position, which prevents him from finding a substitute and turning to the ways that attract him. Nevertheless in principle the thing does exist. And where it exists, it will seem to reverse at times the relative rank of duty and inclination, and substitute considerations of purely objective value for the more personal appeal of this or that particular form of good. But I still contend that this is an exception, and that normally the place of duty is subordinate to the ends chosen for us by our constitution.

The ideal of "living one's own life," then, is not one to be accepted uncritically; it needs limitations and qualifications. But as, to justify these limits further, we need the help of principles not so far discovered, I shall postpone any further remarks to a later point. All I am concerned at present to maintain is, that in general the good life is not an abstraction, but the life that satisfies some individual man; and he therefore can expect no real guidance till he sees the relevancy to the problem of the personal demands that alone give "satisfaction" a meaning. And accordingly the attempt to meet the problem of duty by a purely objective and impersonal calculation of the good is bound to be a failure.

The Principle of Harmony.—If therefore we are to discover principles that will help in assigning actual content to the good life, it must be in connection with a scrutiny of human nature itself, on the side of its concrete

springs of action. Here interests of various kinds exist which constitute my being; can we lay down generally how they must be utilized, or are we left just with *suggestions* of possible satisfaction, which each man has then experimentally to test out for himself?

The first and most obvious possibility is one that has already been met in connection with the self-realization formula. If competing interests are present, it might seem that if we can hit upon some adjustment that will measurably satisfy both, we are better off than if we had to sacrifice one to the other. Inclusiveness, therefore, or rational completeness and harmony, has been a familiar thesis of ethical systems; and it lends itself to a practical ideal of life which has had a wide vogue.

But when we translate this into concrete situations, we discover empirically that at least it cannot be followed blindly. Purely as a matter of expediency and fact, it may often seem the wiser course to sacrifice some desires to others. To combine them will inevitably in many instances be possible only through a compromise which abates something of their full pretensions; and quite conceivably the sum of losses may be greater than if we had frankly thrown overboard the weaker interest. Indeed it would seem as if this were almost necessarily true when we take things on a scale large enough. The general experience of mankind bears out the claim that the average person, at least, is more likely to find satisfaction through self-limitation, than by spreading himself out too thin. We should doubtless like, if we could, to develop all our tastes; but the pressure of facts cannot be escaped. Our powers are not capable indefinitely of being extended, and the outer world takes no great apparent interest in rendering successful compromises always easy; sacrifice is a plain necessity. It need not be sacrifice of the utmost

possible good. But certainly it is a sacrifice of the utmost *conceivable* good. And my point is just that the limits of the possible, things being what they are, are too straitened to make it feasible to carry out strictly the principle of a full and rounded self-development with no sacrifice of subordinate parts.

Nor do I think an unbiased judgment necessarily condemns a very considerable disproportion in the conduct of our lives even when this might conceivably have been avoided, provided the access of satisfaction is thereby increased. Most people are compelled by the mere fact of economic pressure to make the choice constantly between alternative goods; and if a man may be supposed to have a genuine passion for first editions or Japanese prints, and elects to gratify his taste at the cost of severe retrenchments in other lines, it would seem pedantic to blame him on no better ground than the abstract admirableness of a balanced expenditure.

There is indeed a secondary sense in which the process of self-limitation may easily go farther than is desirable or necessary. Limitation is the common lot; but limitation is not the same as narrowness. The narrow man is the man who not only decides that he cannot do everything, and so specializes; he also thereupon loses interest in the things he has rejected, and so limits mental outlook and sympathy as well as action. And there really is no reason why this should be, or why one should not continue to cultivate a friendly concern for many things in which he cannot hope to take an active part. He does not even need to follow them closely, so long as he maintains an open and receptive mind. But because we can still retain our interest in this sense, it would be absurd to say that there has been no sacrifice in the sense the principle deprecates. The interest of mental participation is not the

interest of active participation. I may retain a fondness for concerts, and still regret that I was unable to carry on my music; a sympathy with literary, or political, or benevolent enterprises no more satisfies my suppressed ambitions along such lines, than a sympathy for lovers is a substitute for marriage.

Of course it is so that by taking the matter firmly in hand, and making it the one business of his life to secure for himself a fully rounded development, a man may come indefinitely closer to the goal, even if it remains in strictness unattainable. This stands as one of the accredited human ideals. But it very certainly would not be generally accepted as the one ideal by which all others are to be tested. And it has plain deficiencies of its own. It can be lived most successfully where the full life is itself the expression of a narrow and special interest. Goethe is likely for a long time to remain the best exemplar of the type; and we may tolerate in a man like Goethe what in the mere dilettante we should cordially detest, because after all Goethe is always the workman, the artist. He is not living simply for the sake of his own beautiful life, but to utilize the results of experience for literary purposes; it is his literary specialization which excuses, in so far as it does excuse, the sentimentalisms of the "full life." But even in Goethe the ideal does not fully stand the test of reflective appreciation. Self-realization is after all self-centered, and therefore petty when we put it alongside the bigger world. "Very early," writes Margaret Fuller of herself, "I knew that the only object in life was to grow." To grow is certainly much to be desired. But to make the inner process of growth itself the professed object of ambition is just the dubious point in the ideal; it assumes that the most interesting thing in the universe

is oneself—a natural supposition which experience may be expected to dispose us to find questionable.

For there is a vast difference between taking a wide interest in things because they are interesting, and taking a wide interest because the interests are ours, and what we have in view is to develop our capacities. The last motive is useful as a secondary motive, which serves incidentally to correct our natural laziness. But to transform it into the one main thing worth seeking is to get it badly out of perspective. Naturally when we take an interest in things the interest is ours. But it is nevertheless in having our eyes fixed on the objective facts that a healthy interest consists, and not on the relation to ourselves. It might perhaps be held that such objective interests are all that the principle of "inclusiveness" really demands, and that it can be interpreted in terms of their harmonious adjustment. But in point of fact its logic lends itself almost inevitably to the *self*-realization ideal. If the "complete life" is our goal, then it is bound to be a matter of regret if any part of ourselves fails of development; and our eyes will need constantly to be directed inward to guard against a loss of opportunity through inadvertence. A disinterested interest in things, on the other hand, is more than likely to supplant and interfere with the compromising instinct. In the pressure of weighty issues gripping our attention lesser matters will often seem impertinent, and the demand that we salvage all our personal assets rather trivial. And where an interest in things and issues holds us, we can afford such a large indifference. If I do not see to my own cultivation no one will attend to it for me, and the end remains unattained. But *causes* may still be achieved apart from me by others, and perhaps even better achieved. It would be presumptuous

to suppose that because I am not there to look after things they will not be done; and so without self-condemnation I can usually make my option for the special interest that is mine, and still feel that the world is safe.

There is no need to deny that the principle of "all-roundness" has an important suggestive value. Most men need to be reminded that the potentialities of life are greatly in excess of present attainment, and that if they are overlooking some possible source of added interest they are acting short-sightedly. But many suggestions after all will come to nothing; and what actually ministers most to the sense of living, personal experiment alone can determine. Certainly if the all-round life is taken to mean that each type of interest is deserving of equal cultivation, it will work more harm than good. All it can fairly intend to say is, that no element of our nature should be left wholly without exercise. And this is indeed a rule of prudence, to the extent that we should give every side a fair chance to show its value. It should clearly be one of the main ends of a genuine education that no one be left without a taste, at least, of the typical sorts of human interest, since otherwise he cannot be sure he is not missing his vocation.

But having had their chance, it is possible, and even probable, that some will do more service by thereafter being dropped. It is a less questionable meaning of the self-realization type of formula if we take it as in substance rather this, that the successful life will need to be *organized*. But the basis of the organization will much better be looked for, not in the "self," but in a controlling interest or task. The only way to escape distraction, dissipation of energy, constant hesitation and vacillation through the need of canvassing over again at each new crisis the relative value to be set on competing claims, is

that a man commit himself, and make up his mind that here rather than there the interest lies which is capable of gripping him and keeping him steadily and pleasantly at his work, without a constant unsettling of the conditions of effective and forward-moving action. Here we have a real principle of subordination; other things are good in proportion as they lend themselves to the accomplishment of this main design, or at least do not actively impede it. Subordination to the "self," on the other hand, has no plain meaning, unless we fall back on the outworn notion of "faculties" standing to one another in some inherent relationship of worth. As a working tool, the "whole" is thus no one standard fact of human nature. Neither the whole, nor what is meant in the concrete by subordination to the whole, is determinable until the particular work is chosen; and what that central organizing fact shall be we cannot discover without appeal to the individual case.

As there seems to be no standard rule of subordination that can be applied to the elements of every life, so it is not easy to establish generally the claim, in connection with any sort of interest in particular, that it is indispensable to the best life for every man. We may argue that if an impulse is given no exercise it will persist as an unappeased craving to trouble life and stir up discontent; and in case some particular impulse actually acts in this way in a given man, this is indeed in so far a reason for him to take it into account. But it would be unsafe to generalize. In nearly everyone there are interests naturally so weak that if left to themselves they tend to die out. This is much less likely to be true of fundamental bodily instincts, for example, that of sex. But even in such a case there is no absolute rule that can safely be laid down. Not only do men differ here as elsewhere, but

circumstances may at times dictate suppression as necessary to the satisfied life, since we have seen that "satisfaction" does not need to mean painlessness, or an entire absence of sacrifice.

Another point on which to argue that some cultivation of a potential interest is bound to be an addition to life is the undoubted fact that, if it is potentially interesting, it is a positive source of pleasure. But while the fact is so, the inference is doubtful, since the pleasure it adds may be far less than could have been secured from rival sources. On the whole the best ground for urging that no aspect of human nature should be left undeveloped, is that the various sides of life are so interrelated that each may suffer to some extent when other sides are atrophied. This is clearly so of such a thing as intellectual capacity; it appears equally, though less forcibly, in other human traits. Thus when art is thought of as a separate interest, the case is none too strong for urging every man alike to cultivate it. But if the niceness of appreciation and disinterestedness of attitude which art develops is a requirement in practical and moral life as well, there might be ground for holding that, with no æsthetic training at all, a man is sensibly missing his full possibilities of good. But at best this leaves the "principle" very vague and indeterminate. It goes very little distance indeed toward telling us how far we are to cultivate a given interest, and in what relation it should stand to other aspects of life.

The Source of Constitutive Principles.—But while from the facts of positive desire there seems little direct guidance in principle, without a primary reliance on the process of experimentation and the lead of personal demands, the case is improved substantially when we turn to those negative emotional constituents to which has

been traced the peculiar character of the moral ought. While it is only hesitatingly that I can say to a man, You must gratify this positive propensity if you are to hope for the most out of life—since it depends a great deal upon the relative strength of the propensities in him, and the circumstances in which his life is set—it is usually much safer to lay it down generally that, in living the varied life of desire, he needs to take account of negative and moralistic limitations, under penalty of a sense of self-condemnation which renders contentment improbable.

It is accordingly in connection with such restraining feelings, normally ineradicable from human nature, that we may look for the sort of principle that ethics mainly is after to help determine the actual content of successful living. And it will appear that this has been largely implicated in the previous discussion. Thus the case against an all-round culture as a specific ideal rested mainly on the fact that, owing to its absorption in *self*-culture, it falls under the condemnation of the ethical judgment of triviality. But equally on the other hand we condemn for the same reason too ready an acquiescence in a one-sided interest, as not consistent with our sense of the significance and dignity of man and his life; so that we do have a principled ground for accepting "all-roundness" as a suggestive guide, even if it has to be left to the individual case to determine what the ideal is to mean. Similarly of the claims upon us of any interest or capacity in particular. We may find difficulty in enforcing an interest simply on the basis of its positive addition to the satisfied content of experience. But add to this the need of avoiding certain negative sources of dissatisfaction, and usually it does not fail in the large to get a standing. Thus active benevolence in one's scheme of life has a somewhat precarious foundation in

the pleasures of benevolence. These are real pleasures, and when they are felt as such they become self-evidently a part of the good. But if a man does not happen to feel them acutely, you cannot easily argue with him that he is missing thereby the good life. He will tell you, and perhaps truly, that he gets greater pleasure in other and inconsistent ways. Nor is it argumentatively certain that the cultivation of benevolence is demanded by the claims of enlightened self-interest; on the whole, the careers of the most successful men of affairs do not seem to bear this out. But it is also open to point out that a man is, too, a creature capable of being affected, even against his will, by sympathy or a sense of justice, and that to go ahead without any reference to this emotional capacity is to lay oneself open to unpleasant memories; or, again, that social good is too necessary an element in the significance of human standards to be left out of account if a man wants to retain his self-respect and pleasure in his work.

True, these feelings also differ in different men; and one cannot prophesy securely just how a given man's "conscience" will work. But there is one significant point about them. The pleasures of desire depend upon the active working of desire; and this is temporary and fluctuating. But the moral emotions, just because they arise in a contemplative or reflective situation, are less amenable to circumstance. They are not exhausted by indulgence, but stand ready to work whenever we stop to think; and so they grow stronger as the more insistent and individualistic cravings become quiescent. And since, for a rational mind, satisfaction comes increasingly to lie less in that which is simply pleasant while it lasts, and more in what will "remember well," by their influence on approval they get an intimate relation to our judgments about ourselves, out of proportion to their own relatively

weak character. After the tumult and the shouting are over, and a man settles back to count his gains, he can, if he has real intelligence, hardly fail in a quiet moment to note if his acts have violated persistent human sympathies, or if the ends he has aimed at fail to measure up to a satisfying human standard. And as this affects his permanent judgment, the feelings in question, even though they have less influence than might be thought desirable on immediate action, do come to be central to man's ethical ideals, and so in the long run influence conduct also.

CHAPTER VII

THE APPLICATION OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

An Illustration of the Use of Principles.—The general conclusion of the preceding chapter has been, that because the more positive and individualistic claims of the good are dependent on desire, which varies widely, and innocently, in various men, it is in the peculiarly moralistic field, constituted by those restraining elements of human nature which issue in the judgment of the moral ought, that most of the constitutive principles of ethics capable of general application have to be looked for. I shall not attempt here to draw up a list of such principles, which in their more general form would connect themselves with the list of inhibitive feelings in which a source has been sought for the sense of moral obligation. But it will be useful to give one illustration, and to suggest how this may be applied so as actually in some measure to afford guidance in conduct. And I shall take a case which brings us in contact again with considerations already discussed.

There are two ways in which we are able to estimate the relative rank of human ends. One is subjectively in terms of the degree of desire; and this each person has to settle for himself, the actual felt strength of the desire being the only final test. The other is an objective or rational standard. It is possible, that is, to judge roughly the rank of any human activity on the basis of the relative place it occupies in the world, its bulk, and the range of its influence and results. And to this latter judgment there may also be attached a feeling tone which leads us under

certain conditions to look with disfavor upon that which occupies quantitatively a lower standing; this is one pervasive form of the moral feeling of constraint which has already been distinguished.

Such a moralistic judgment is, I have held, subordinate, in that it presupposes to begin with the positive and assertive side of man's nature, which is what fundamentally determines his end and ideal. But in its secondary place, as one requirement of human satisfaction, it does carry certain rational conditions which have to be met before we can safely acquiesce in what we take to be our wants, since otherwise these in the end are bound, in so far as we are reasonable beings, to occasion the discontent that comes from violating our reflective natures. And one condition is this, that an ideal of life should actually *have* consequences such as are capable of meeting this quantitative test. While it is not so that the true end for any man can be fully stated on the basis of work done, no end is capable of justification to the reflective self which does not issue in an objective outcome of one sort or another. It is essential to any ideal that is not to call forth intellectual disapprobation on the ground of inherent lack of worth, that it should have something to offer as a contribution to the permanent structure of reality. And on this ground we can rule out at the start certain forms of life as never acceptable to the instructed moral judgment. Such is, in particular, the life of mere pleasure-getting. For the great defect of pleasure as an end is its inability to stand the test of the reflective quantitative judgment. The man who lives for pleasure lives for that which perishes at the moment of attainment. It passes, and leaves no trace; it does not build itself into the structure of things, or set up, through intention, a train of significant consequences. And consequently there

is nothing for the rational mind in its quest for reality to seize upon in order to justify in memory the momentary sense of significance that attended it.

When however we have made allowance for such unacceptable ideals, there still remain the vastly greater number of human careers from which we have to choose. And here the objective principle does not tell me positively the rôle I ought to play. So long as the chance of permanent significance attaches to an ideal, it leaves it open as a possibility. If I could find myself equally satisfied, approximately, in either of two careers, naturally I should be led to condemn myself were I to choose the less. But normally no question of quantitative results ought in reason to override the primary demand that I find some course of life in which it is possible for me to reap the reward of a mind content. Where the principle now comes in is to warn me to use whatever career I do adopt in a way not to stir up my own capacity for intellectual disapproval. Any normal occupation has in it the possibilities of objective results; that one should keep one's eyes pretty steadily upon these is the clear teaching of experience. There is more genuine pleasure in work, to begin with, when interest attends upon the feeling of objective significance. A man loses in large degree the zest of the thing who does his task with an eye single to the effects upon his own pleasure, or ambition, or bank account. If he can see his business, for example, as a part of the machinery by which the world's needs are met, and not as a mere private money-making concern, it is hardly possible that there should not be an accession of satisfaction. And the more solid and permanent the result, the less the chance of ensuing discontent. It is not so much that we should do *big* things. If we are not of the caliber for this, the desire only means an uneasy and

troubled mind. It is rather that, whatever we find that we particularly care to do, it should be done so that it will approve its own goodness by *lasting*, and so heightening in its degree the interest of an interesting world. Even a vocation which counts itself already disinterested can add indefinitely to its own significance by a more conscious aiming at objective permanence in its product; philanthropy, for example, is constantly on the defensive until it turns from the mere amelioration of suffering as it arises, to an intelligent endeavor to reconstruct lastingly the world so as to make the continued exercise of charity less necessary.

The same conclusion is borne out by the accredited forms which moral education tends more and more to take. There is, indeed, a common and useful way of moral appeal the machinery of which is primarily emotional. It consists in putting men in the imaginative situation that shall automatically touch off appropriate springs of feeling, such as will have either a deterrent or a stimulating effect upon desire. It is unlikely that we shall ever be able to dispense with this; but the limitations to its effectiveness are evident. And in proportion as men grow intellectually does its power over them tend to decrease, until they may even come to resent the attempt to stir them up through their emotions. More and more, to the rational man, incentives to conduct are found in an appeal to his own sense of intellectual self-respect, through the perception of relative values involved in an impartial survey of the world of experience. If one wishes to influence him it is increasingly safe to rely, not on the accredited emotional sentiments of the past, but on the persuasiveness of objective interests, as an offset to the narrow and selfish life which claims him by nature.

And on the negative side, also, as a sharpener of the

reluctant conscience, the same thing plays a part which has hardly been sufficiently recognized by ethical theory, though in practice its moral efficacy has never been overlooked. Of all the tools which may be used to open a man's eyes to his delinquencies, on the side of their unreason, and their inexcusable meanness and pettiness, the most powerful in its possibilities, and on the whole perhaps the safest in its exercise, is the weapon of humor. What humor does, as a "criticism of life," is to throw a sudden light of self-revelation upon the insignificance of that which in our overserious or perverse or unthinking moods we are given to taking at its face value. Accordingly it is a commonplace that men's conduct, even when immune to exhortation or sympathy or persuasive argument, is often found to yield to ridicule. And this cannot be wholly due to the mere desire to escape the ill-opinion of others, for their ill-opinion is often more outspoken in other forms, and yet may have very much less effect than the mere suspicion that some one is laughing at us. And humor is a safe tool, because it is exempt from some of the more serious dangers of the moralistic experience in general. A spirit of humor helps to soften the asperities of the moral life, and keeps us from painting the world in too dark a hue; but most of all it prevents us from taking ourselves, and our private interests and opinions, too seriously. And I should wish to emphasize this in particular as a very necessary qualification of any doctrine of individualism. Unless one can view these interests of his with a tolerant and humorous eye, and carry over even into his personal enthusiasm for them an impartial sense of their place—a very minor place—in the whole scheme of things, the individualist is much too apt in practice to turn into the egoist or the fanatic.

To strike just the right note here is doubtless a matter of some difficulty, as are most important things in life. Anything whatever can be made ridiculous; to see this side of it, and nothing more, is to become the mere jester, whose claim to be regarded as the ideal moralist is certainly very slight. But between a too solemn sense of high importance, and that conviction of the intrinsic smallness of everything in particular which some of our satirists have displayed, there is a middle ground. It is not against the importance of things that the spirit of humor sets itself, but their *over*-importance. And the habit of keeping an eye out for the readiness of our interests to get out of proportion need have no tendency to discourage them, provided they rest on some basis more dependable than a mere intellectual judgment. In that case I do not have to be under the idealistic illusion to prevent my interests from losing their savor and going back on me. I may see my work clear-sightedly at its true rating, and still, if naturally I like doing the thing, it will remain significant, even while I am at the same time ready to be amused at the pretentiousness of its claims when it can take me off my guard. Just where the line is to be drawn between seriousness of interest and a humorous tolerance no principle can tell us; it must be left, again, as in the end everything must be left, for experience and common sense to decide.

I ought then—to return to the main point—under penalty of being adjudged small and petty in my aims, and of growing dissatisfied with them, to be assured at the start that they offer some contribution to the general stock of good outside myself. A rational and objectively-minded being can hardly be content with a life that does not take its significant place in the larger economy

of the universe. And this will appear also to provide a sufficient basis for the "social" or "humanitarian" emphasis which in modern times has tended to displace that primary reference to personal interest on which the present discussion has been based. It is no more healthy, while we are engaged in the active business of life, to be thinking about the benevolent, or self-sacrificing, or humanitarian character of our deeds, than to be thinking about the pleasure they will bring us—a judgment it would be hard to justify if it really were their serviceable nature, and not their appeal to our personal interest, which constituted the original source of their goodness. A man who actually does something worth while for the world is in almost every case the man who works primarily because he likes it, and not he who flatters himself that he is "doing the world good." But after a connection with personal interest is already presupposed, "service" may have a very great significance when we come to search for principles that shall help guide our natural predispositions along lines capable of insuring lasting satisfaction. It does not by itself inform me what I am to do if I am told to "serve humanity," unless the advice can presuppose a prior interest in certain kinds of achievement for their own sake. Apart from the motive that comes from such a personal appeal, I shall neither know what to go to work at in particular, nor am I likely to be effective enough in anything to count for much in the world's business. It is not necessary even that my choice should in the first place contain any very explicit reference to a value for mankind. The born artist or the born mathematician is not called upon to reckon up the amount of "good" he is going to do before he devotes himself to art or science; the man of real gifts is so sure that his product possesses inde-

pendent value—just because it is so satisfying to him—that he is inclined to be impatient when asked to prove its "social" worth. But at the same time the *possibility* of being "good for something," though it does not create originally the persuasion of significance, *is* needed if an intelligent being is to be able to justify his course to disinterested thought; and this will mean, with human nature constituted as it is, some measure at least of social usefulness. The man who feels an inner call to paint pictures would ordinarily be thought foolish if, on a purely abstract calculation that the ministry contributes more *per capita* to the general happiness, he were to make of himself a preacher instead. But if on scrutiny *some* advantage to his fellows were not discoverable in his choice, doubts could hardly fail to enter his mind about its wisdom. Art at times actually takes directions whose triviality and lack of large human value compel a new insistence on art's "social" function, until it is brought back to lines more capable of standing the test of reflective significance.

Principles and Conduct.—In turning now to certain more general considerations about the place of principles in the concrete life of conduct, it is important to notice in the first place—what ethical theory has not always sufficiently realized—that such principles are only preliminary to the final work of the moral judgment, and that this last is an act individual and unique, for which no issue can be set down beforehand. Ethics as a science deals only with the ethical judgments of the past. It is never a direct source of *new* moral truth; and what as moral beings we are most vitally concerned with is the *growth* in moral wisdom which new situations demand. The source of this novel truth lies rather in intuition, or moral tact; and intuition presupposes a concrete, and

not an abstract and scientific habit of mind. I may generalize moral truths already discovered; but I get *insight* only by envisaging actual moral situations. Accordingly in the field of casuistry the novelist has always been immensely more successful than the ethical philosopher.

Not of course that we cannot make use of generalizations to help solve immediate problems of conduct; for in that case they would have no interest for us. But the generalizations are not universals, since they fall short precisely in connection with the case in hand. We cannot be certain that past rules will automatically cover the present instance, but have in connection with the specific circumstances to feel our way to an outcome which, in its entirety, is genuinely novel. As accounts in particular of what is right or wrong in conduct, such general moral truths are only convenient formulations for helping us organize our experience, and bring the lessons of the past to bear upon the present. To say that lying is wrong, or that charity is a virtue, gives us no strict rule for governing conduct. It classifies certain kinds of action roughly by reference to their general tendencies, and in so far as new cases are really similar to the old it enables us to have in a measure ready-made judgments on hand. But the moment the new case differs significantly from those with which we are familiar, we find ourselves compelled to pass a new judgment. And it makes no difference whether we say that it is always wrong to lie, but that this is a case which we refuse to call lying, or whether we say that even though this is a lie, yet the judgment about lying is only approximately universal and the present case an exception. Either way, what we have to do is to scrutinize the novel situation and allow it as a whole to call up its immediate re-

sponse, in which our *feeling* reaction is constitutive and essential.

And this response is a new and creative achievement, not to be come at by the mechanical process of fitting a new fact into familiar pigeonholes. No man who meets a genuinely new set of circumstances which raise for him a case of conscience, and who comes to see what his new duty in the matter is, can tell just *how* he came to the decision. Still less is there any purely "rational" way of going to work to form it in the first place. As in all thinking that is original and firsthand, a man starts with facts, points of view, generalizations, representing what has been found hitherto to be the case; and he keeps his mind playing on the situation, half blindly, quite experimentally, until at last, he knows not how, the light breaks upon him, and whereas before things were obscure to him, now he *sees*. And a new moral truth differs from an intellectual one only by reason of the part that feeling, or value, plays in the solution. Instead of saying that he sees this to be the "truth"—sees the elements of the problem, that is, falling into a harmonious scheme of relationships—he now more naturally says that he *feels* this to be "right." And it happens often in human experience that at a certain point argument only confuses wisdom. All sorts of plausible reasons can be given for a refusal to accept a moral judgment, none of which may be capable of final refutation; in despair a man is driven to reply, Well, if you don't yourself *feel* that it is so, there is nothing more to be said.

It is no business of ethics, accordingly, to endeavor to apply moral principles to the concrete needs of action, in the sense in which this would profess to tell a man that he ought in a specific case of difficulty to speak the truth, or that he ought to be a total abstainer, or to vote the

Democratic ticket. That is something that cannot possibly be laid down in general terms; it depends upon the exact nature of the conditions, and of the man. The most that can be done is to draw up general statements of what *tends* to be, on the average, men's duty in cases of a certain class. There is one special sort of situation, however, in which the circumstances render the possibilities of direct guidance somewhat greater. I have already had occasion to observe that the value of a study of ethics is to enable us to canvass the various ends of action before we are put under the pressure of the immediate call to act. In the field of practice, its primary question is, not, Is this particular act right? but, What kind of a life is a good and desirable life? And this last question has an immediate relevancy to one situation in particular—when, that is, we are choosing a "career," a general direction of action. This is also a practical choice, for which we need moral guidance; but it is a choice with a peculiar character of its own. By the fact that it is setting out to anticipate action, it is largely freed from the particular conditions—which cannot be anticipated—that make it so impossible to lay down rules of conduct ahead of performance; it can give heed primarily, not to what a definite set of circumstances calls for, but to what is desirable in itself and good. After I have once committed myself to an end I am in a measure helpless; I have to act in view of such circumstances as confront me, or not at all. But in choosing the end itself I am, provided I am at all fortunately placed, much more free to let inclination and sense of worth determine my choice.

It is to such a situation that the previous illustrations of the use of moralistic principles will be found applying. Meanwhile it has this other advantage also, that the facts

of individual disposition and temperament are here at our disposal in a relatively simple and straightforward way. And in connection with these latter facts it is possible to deal with the practical question of the choice of a career in a principled, but a still more concrete fashion.

The Choice of a Vocation.—The possibility of the good life lies first of all in the chance of finding work which will offer full scope to my capacities, without making it necessary to overstrain myself if success is to be won; which does not lead into a blind alley therefore, but may in the nature of things be expected constantly to be opening up new and promising vistas, and new avenues of effort; which excites my close interest and attention, and my lasting interest, so that I shall want to stick to it; and of whose real and substantial value to the world as well as to myself I can be persuaded in my own mind. This does not imply that life is to be all eager interest, free from drudgery and the need at times for painful effort. No work is pleasant all of the time; there are bound to be spots or zones where only sheer will power will see us through. Indeed it is the only sure test that we have hit upon our real forte, and not been misled by unsteady flashes of interest, that we should find ourselves willing to perform the incidental drudgery; a mere liking for a task so long as it can be done without special trouble on our part is very unsafe ground for settling a career. Nevertheless so long as our work on the whole appeals to us as drudgery, and leaves us looking ahead and counting the days till it is over, we can be confident that we are on the wrong track; and the risks of a new start are usually far less to be considered than the certainty of dulling the edge of life through continuing to apply our powers to tasks to which they are not suited. The secondary and instrumental ends of life are important, but

they have always to be subordinated to the intrinsic ones. And values *are* intrinsic only as they come home to us as personally felt values, accredited by the satisfaction they bring.

It is not at all impossible that a certain type of mind may find its best chance for happiness in turning for its livelihood to a life of unexciting routine, so long as this is not positively unpleasant, and so long as it leaves the time and energy for more personally appealing ends outside the hours of business—such a plan as Charles Lamb adopted not unsuccessfully. For the man whose interests lie in non-commercial things, there may sometimes be a gain in separating his work from the tyranny exercised by the need for making a living, sufficient to counterbalance the loss of time available for its pursuit. There is even a certain appeal in routine itself; so long as it is in the service of ends that can hold our respect, it means that we at least shall be making *some* definite addition to the fund of good, however small, whereas more ambitious ends are often more precarious, and face a greater risk that they may come to nothing. Nevertheless the great majority of men will probably always have to find their staple happiness, if anywhere, in close connection with their daily tasks; and it is therefore immeasurably important that the choice should be farseeing and intelligently made. For some natures such a choice is fixed within very narrow limits; they are built to do this particular thing in the world, and without the chance to do it they miss their calling, and lay themselves open to inevitable discontent. Most of us have a less restricted range, and there are various aptitudes potentially strong enough to hold us pleasantly. But probably in no case is the choice a matter of indifference; certainly the

greater number of human beings have a bias which affects materially their chances of a satisfied life.

Where the choice is not dictated by some particular character of the work, as when a man has an inborn compulsion to paint pictures, or fool with machinery, or explore new continents, there are usually more general conditions of contentment, of a personal sort, which one occupation will satisfy rather than another, and which it pays a man therefore carefully to explore. Can I, for example, work best under pressure, or for the best results do I need leisure and an unforced interest to lead me on? Do I like responsibility, or shall I be more satisfied to leave this to some one else, and do my appointed task? Men plainly differ, and a born executive who has to take orders, or a less independent nature forced into a position of authority, are equally going to be actively unhappy. Do I crave physical exertion and an out-of-doors life, fresh air and open spaces? It would be foolish for me to tie myself down in a bank or a broker's office, whatever the opportunity for making money. Do I enjoy taking chances and putting my fortune to the test, or does uncertainty worry and unstring me, and a safe job attract my fancy rather? Do I like to commit myself to institutions and institutional forms of activity, hold official positions and work through committees, or am I an individualist by nature, with a preference for doing things on my own hook and going my own way? If you really want to make your efforts count, we are often told, you *must* join these concerted activities, where vagaries are repressed, and the multitude of small services, each almost negligible in itself, are conserved and nursed until in the aggregate they make the imposing show we call civilization. And to many there will be an emotional enlargement also in the sense of being

an instrument in a large and going concern. But it is plain that one has thus to be institutionally minded himself if this is to be good advice for him; for a different sort of person such a life only seems to crush spontaneity, and courage, and even conscience, and to deaden zest.

The first requisite, then, for the successful life, is that it should be organized along the lines of a concrete, growing, active interest, determined in so far as possible by the bias of one's individual nature, but engineered, as by using brains it can always be, to bring one into contact on as wide a front as possible with the real world, and to gain as great a significance as possible by the part it is given to play. And in particular this will mean that it shall have a "social" value; not only does the world of social relationships supply the bulk of our human interests, but on its personal side the social is the source of peculiarly intimate, pure, and satisfying intrinsic values.

But now usually, though not in every case, this primary demand needs supplementing by a second point. The danger of the specialist is that he always tends, unless he exercises very great care indeed, to narrowness. It is true that many things, most things perhaps, can be utilized in a fashion to give effectiveness and significance to almost any vocation. Still the contribution is often small and indirect; and it is not always easy to justify its cultivation simply as an instrumental value. And even were it possible there still would be a drawback. It is not in the interests of a wide and rich life that we should get in the habit of organizing experience too closely about our vocation. It breeds the professional type of mind, for which the whole furniture of earth and heaven lends itself to talk of shop; and a "professional" of any sort falls in so far a little short of being human.

At best, that aspect of affairs which shows an immediate bearing on a special interest must itself be a special aspect; and there is a gain therefore if we release the world at times from the necessity of joining in the retinue of a single personal end, and allow the mind to take an interest in things for their immediate and intrinsic interestingness. It is well, that is, to cultivate a variety of subordinate interests which do *not* have too close a relationship to our main work. This is needed, too, for the sake of health and sanity; the main service which some of our interests have to render to the central life is just to get us away from it, that we may then return with added freshness.

To have "many tastes and one hobby"—this sums up the two requirements of a normally good life. And in connection with the second point we may note a significance that still remains to the notion of pleasure as the end. It is fatal to translate our vocation directly into hedonistic terms. The moment this is dominated by a conscious intention to get pleasure, and not by an interest in the work itself and a sense of its value, we can be sure that the underlying conditions are already changed in a way to make wholehearted satisfaction in it impossible. And then too, "pleasure" offers no principle for the intelligent direction of work; it tends to be an intruder rather, interfering with efficiency of thought and action.

But with our avocations the case is somewhat different. Here a certain amount of pleasure-seeking is not only harmless; for most men it is an important ingredient in the satisfying life. Only rarely can a man expect from his routine work all the hedonistic sweetening that life normally demands. The average man needs also to have a more desultory and irresponsible contact with the

good. He needs to be able to look forward regularly, and more or less often, to a succession of little pleasures which mean nothing much individually—indeed their peculiar service demands that they stop largely with themselves—but which nevertheless lighten up and add significance to the day's outlook. A pipe, a bit of light reading, a favorite dish now and then, a rubber at whist —these are not things for the serious-minded man to indulge in hesitatingly with a vaguely disquieted conscience. They are legitimate aims in life, to be planned for intelligently and savored wholeheartedly. It is an unquestionable grievance when any class of men find such things beyond their reach; and if, deprived of a more innocent outlet, they turn to drink and dissipation to supply the need, society has itself largely to blame. Even the man of high and serious mood, who would have life always attired in its Sunday best with no relaxation permitted, might find his perspective broadened, as at least he would be on more sympathetic terms with his humbler neighbors, if he could consent to see the place in life of the irrelevant, the amusing, and the simply pleasant.

But if pleasures are thus not the whole of life, if they supply only the comic relief to its more strenuous and tragic theme, we have certain principles for their selection. We need to be continually on guard against their usurping a disproportionate share of our time and energy; and only such pleasures are rational as readily subordinate themselves and keep within bounds. This is the permanent value of Epicureanism and its modern successors. Epicureanism goes amiss in that it would have us dine on what properly is only a dessert; but its receipt for the dessert is excellent. No intelligent man can fail to recognize the superiority in the long run of natural pleasures over artificial ones, the modest over

the extravagant, the mild over the passionate and headstrong, the intellectual and æsthetic and social over the crudely physical. It is not so clear that this balance would continue to hold were pleasure itself the main and comprehensive goal. But if pleasure is to subordinate itself to a "career," such claims are usually self-evident. The pleasures which morality agrees in condemning, whether or not they are bad in themselves, at least are out of proportion in a life organized with the idea of definite accomplishment. Either they are disrupting and active trouble-breeders, dissipating bodily vigor as well as claiming more and more our thoughts and diverting these from useful employment; or, though in themselves harmless, they consume a disproportionate amount of human energy. The artificial pleasures of a wealthy class are not only in point of fact not very amusing, but to every one with a true sense of proportion the laborious preparation which they call for is wholly out of harmony with their incidental function and value, and gives an unpleasant impression of intellectual futility.

The familiar receipt for happiness of "limiting our desires" has an important part of its meaning here. It is not that we should moderate effort in the attainment of what we really want, or even revise our feeling of its value; though it is usually wise to indulge in moderate expectations of personal reward. The man who counts on little need work none the less hard, and meanwhile will avoid much inevitable disappointment; and what good does come will be to him clear gain. But in connection with the side issues of life the principle has a direct and literal claim. A stoical element of moderation, of repression even, must enter into a well-advised Epicureanism, if pleasure is to keep its place in the organized life.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VIRTUES. THE SUMMUM BONUM

The Nature of a Virtue.—It remains to say a few words, but a few words only, about those qualities or types of action that usually are called the virtues.

A virtue, as appeared in a previous chapter, is a type of character recognized—in the first instance probably by a public or social judgment—as conducive to the interests of the good life; and it is the only kind of good capable of enlisting our "moral" approval in the fullest sense. A virtue is the one thing always and categorically good. Notice this does not mean that we ought always to perform a certain kind of *act*—to speak the truth, or pay our debts. Applied to the realm of concrete conduct, a virtue represents, not a cast-iron rule of action, but a value-consideration which action needs to take into account in the process of making up its mind. But though we cannot safely say that a man ought always to tell the truth, we can say that he ought always to be truthful. There is a sense in which a man may be truthful even when, for good and sufficient reasons, he is saying what is not so—if he still *prefers* truthfulness to lying. We need in other words to distinguish between a virtue and a virtuous deed. A virtue is an act, in a way. But it is primarily an act, or habit, of *approval* —a rational rather than a biological fact. It represents a method for the *valuing* of conduct, a persistent disposition to call certain kinds of action good. And so long as I do not waver in my allegiance, I may still be

called a fundamentally truthful man even if a clash with some other value makes it necessary for me on occasion to abandon literal truthtelling.

It follows that a virtue is not an original "principle" of ethics; as a statement to the effect that certain kinds of motive and intention are good—a habit of approval —it is a *result* of the more general and fundamental principles that have already been discussed. Any virtue in particular may look for its support to a confluence of several different principles; indeed every type of principle may be represented in a single case. So, for example, of truthtelling. In making out a case against lying, one might first appeal to prudential reasons, in terms of enlightened self-interest. Commonly, in the world as it is constituted, lying is a poor way of advancing one's personal interests. A suspicion that he does not tell the truth automatically deprives a man of the confidence of his fellows, and so of the advantages which mutual confidence brings to the necessary work of human cooperation. If he thinks he can depart from the truth and still escape detection, he is pretty sure to be revealing his own weakmindedness, and his inadequate understanding of human probabilities. To keep up a fabric of deceit is an almost hopeless task, which grows at each stage more difficult to sustain. Facts, realities, instead of backing the liar and entrenching him, are sources of constant danger to his edifice of lies; and even if he is successful in evading these, it is usually at an expense of effort and ingenuity that would much more profitably have been expended in a different way. But besides the practical folly of lying, it calls forth also immediate judgments of distaste which bring in the more constitutive type of principle. Much lying, perhaps most of it, is directly or indirectly due to cowardice, and is there-

fore open to the emotional condemnation that cowardice calls forth. The other most common motive is a desire to get an unfair advantage; on this side lying is a form of injustice, and has to reckon with the feeling of moral indignation. In some cases, it is true, neither of these reasons is much in evidence. When a Doctor Cook hoaxes the world, the specific injury is small, and perhaps is compensated by the addition it makes to the gaiety of nations. In like manner a student who cheats in examination does not seriously injure his instructor, or, unless some competitive honor is involved, his fellow students. Here the feeling against the act is more subtle, and definitely weaker; but it still exists. Perhaps it is mainly our dislike of the habit of bluffing, and of seeking for credit which one does not deserve—a habit likely to reveal the vice of laziness, and, almost certainly, a lack in self-respect. Also it is an unenviable proof of intellectual shortsightedness. It fails to appreciate the wider value that attaches to an atmosphere of sincerity in human affairs, and proceeds lightheartedly to undermine it for personal reasons that are totally inadequate. Still again, in a somewhat more indirect way, lying is forbidden also by the first and formal type of principle; its tendency is to lessen the chances for the effective application of reason to life. The liar starts out with the full intention of deceiving others only; he is apt to end by fooling himself. One cannot too long juggle with facts without losing to an extent his own sense for reality, and the sure-footed ability to distinguish truth from falsehood; we not infrequently see men who lie so persistently that they begin to believe themselves. At the very least, a persistent course of action which takes into account only the gullible side of human nature is sure to affect our sensitiveness to the existence of sin-

cerity and common sense. The confidence man is liable at any moment to be tripped up by his disposition to regard everyone as a possible dupe.

Meanwhile when we cease to regard the act of truth-telling as simply and unambiguously a "virtue," and attempt to carry it back to its underlying reasons, we have a way of seeing that it does not usurp too high a place in human life as a precise rule of conduct. When telling an untruth, in the literal sense, fails to call forth any of these various judgments of condemnation, the act in that case ceases to be morally bad. To tell a lie to a prospective murderer is not wrong, but unequivocally right; and the man who should be willing to see serious and undeserved harm come to another in order to save the purity of his own conscience unstained would himself come in for condemnation. We need to be extremely cautious in our analysis of all such claims to exemption from ordinary rules. But where a case can be made out, we are explicitly to accept the act which goes contrary to the customary judgment as a moral act.

The Classification of the Virtues.—The fact that several principles thus converge to give justification to a particular virtue is one important reason why a clear-cut classification of the virtues is so difficult. The form of classification that falls in most readily with the previous discussion will be one which undertakes to refer the various virtues to the same general departments under which ethical principles were distinguished. These are, to repeat, the formal requirements of rational method, the external conditions for carrying out these methods, and the human material of impulse and sentiment which determines concretely the direction and content of the good life. And in the first field there were further distinguished the demands upon reason, and those upon the

will. While there is no exclusive connection, most of the virtues fall into groups which relate themselves rather closely to one or other of these fields.

The formal demands of rationality suggest at once the so-called intellectual virtues. The indispensableness of certain intellectual qualities for the virtuous and successful life—qualities like clear-headedness, sincerity, open-mindedness, largeness of vision, a sense of proportion—is something which in the past has scarcely had its proper recognition. But more recently, and largely through the influence of science and the mental disposition it encourages, they are beginning to come into their own. The habit of looking facts in the face, of calling things by their right names, of refusing to let desire and prejudice influence our perception of what is so, is one altogether necessary to form if success on a large scale is to be expected. In the past the disposition has been to exalt "values," rather to the disparagement of matter-of-fact truth. Men have felt so strongly the importance of certain things—religion, morality, the State—that they have thought it necessary to shield them carefully from adverse influences; and so instead of welcoming criticism, they have made it a crime or a sin to suggest that there perhaps are truths which existing opinion has failed to take sufficiently into account, and they have persecuted the innovator and the sceptic.

It is very evident that this is a short-sighted and even suicidal policy in the long run. If a human end will not stand up before facts, it inevitably in time will have to be abandoned. And if, on the other hand, it really is an attainable end, we are not going to work in the most efficient and economical way to attain it by shutting our eyes to anything real in the conditions we have to face. To persuade ourselves that a fact is not a fact is the

surest way to shipwreck our own plans. The case against prejudice is that it defeats its own ends. A prejudiced man can avoid disaster only so long as his opinions can be kept mere opinions, and excluded from the field of conduct; if he has to act upon them, then, since the world goes by facts, and not by what we happen to believe are facts, any state of mind which hinders our getting at all the facts attainable is against our real desire. This is in the large the foundation of the essentially modern virtue of intellectual tolerance. So long as one can convince himself that he is in possession of the final truth, from which every deviation is a regrettable backsliding, he may logically believe that to tolerate is merely to be false to his trust. But the modern man finds himself less and less able to adopt this self-complacent assurance. And if instead the truth, whether as scientific knowledge, or as a discovery of valuable ways of life, is a slow and tedious achievement in which we still have much to learn, we are lessening our chance of finding it when we check the course of free experimentation, intellectual or practical.

Along with a desire to protect, as we think, important and valuable human interests, the other chief occasion for a lack of sincerity in mental tone is just our natural indolence and hazy-mindedness. And because it thus goes back to qualities of character somewhat less than admirable, the prevalent good-natured indulgence toward small deviations from the exact fact has more importance than the trivial character of these deviations individually might lead us to think. It seems a harmless matter, and perhaps a kindly deference to tender sensibilities, to invent euphemisms in order to avoid calling a spade a spade, and to smooth the rough ways of social intercourse by polite and insincere flatteries and fictions.

But even apart from the flabbiness of mental texture which this encourages, the result is inevitably to take the pungency out of social life itself; "polite" society becomes sooner or later an offense to all the vital instincts. Nor are we showing the truest concern for our fellow beings when we try to shield them from unpleasant truths. If our neighbor's sensibilities cannot stand a reasonable contact with the real opinions and feelings of those about him, they are hardly worth catering to.

One special form of intellectual virtue may be added—the virtue of humility. True humility is intellectual clear-sightedness directed toward ourselves and our own merits; it is the refusal to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, as conceit is a failure in intellectual perspective. Humility does not seek to depreciate any real claims I may possess. This equally, though perhaps at less risk, violates the intellectual conscience. But no man who is willing to open his eyes to his own modest place in the universe, and even to compare himself impartially with his fellow men, will find much excuse for self-glorification. There is no such thing as the human gradations in general and all-round excellence which theories of aristocracy presuppose. At best a given man's superiority lies in this or that direction in particular, and elsewhere other men, even very humble men perhaps, easily outstrip him.

Turning from the intellect to the will, certain new types of virtue are suggested—loyalty, courage, and self-control. Of the first it is perhaps enough to say that if loyalty is not present as a sincere and disinterested acceptance of some objective good worthy our effort, and a persistence in holding to this good and refusing to betray it through lightmindedness or weakness or temptations to selfish gain, then evidently one essential

condition of success is lacking. A somewhat narrower form of loyalty is conscientiousness—loyalty, that is, to our personal sense of moral values. Since we come to recognize the good only through the medium of our own judgments and feelings, and have no more absolute authority on which to depend, a respect for our personal standards is a necessary concomitant of loyalty. But it is well to note that final allegiance is to the good itself, and not to our own persuasion of its worth. And when loyalty to conscience begins to regard conscience as infallible and unchanging, and to ignore the need for growth such as is required if real good is not to be sacrificed to "consistency" and present imperfect insight, it ceases to be in any unqualified sense a virtue.

A similar danger exists in connection with loyalty in its larger meaning. It is easy for loyalty to wed itself to particular forms of life and accomplishment, and overlook the fact that no single established form can safely be allowed to claim our total allegiance. This is what makes patriotism a virtue of a somewhat qualified sort. Patriotic feeling tends to attach to existing arrangements of territory and facts of government, and to forget that government exists only to help men attain a good and satisfying life. There is always a certain fanaticism and inhumanity belonging to a love of country which does not translate itself pretty directly into a concern for the happiness of individuals; thus most Westerners are a little repelled by traits in the Japanese character not obscurely connected with its patriotism.

Courage is possibly the most obvious of all the virtues. Even in its higher and subtler forms—as moral courage—it is easy to recognize; and once recognized, it calls forth spontaneously our natural applause. It will seem less obvious that temperance ranks also as a virtue

of the will only if we confuse temperance with the negative fact of "purity" or blamelessness. This last has no very clear title to the name of virtue; if purity is preserved by withdrawing from temptation, risking nothing, escaping defeat through giving up the chance for victory, it is a thing for morality to condemn rather than to praise. Real temperance on the contrary is an active and even militant virtue; and any disposition to look down upon the man of controlled passions as a weakling is clearly a mistake.

The next list of virtues, following the classification suggested, would be made up of those that grow primarily out of the need for recognizing and taking account of the facts of the environing world. Here come in the prudential or business virtues—thrift, punctuality, commercial honesty, industry, and the like. In so far as these keep merely to the footing of means to an end in terms of self-interest, and do not involve more absolute emotional enthusiasms and condemnations, they occupy a relatively low place in the ethical life; and indeed by some they would not be allowed as moral virtues at all. In view of this, it is worth noticing that such virtues do normally expand to bring into play other principles and motives. Punctuality is primarily a means to practical success. But also it becomes a form of justice as well; the unpunctual man is constantly encroaching on the just rights of his neighbors, and robbing them of a valuable asset—time. And so too does he reveal qualities of character which arouse our immediate dislike. The unpunctual man is in so far a weak-willed man; he has not the force of character to make him do things when they ought to be done against the protest of the flesh.

In spite of the lower moral standing of the prudential virtues, they have a practical value that is very consid-

erable as a method of moral exhortation. An appeal to more fundamental emotional judgments will have the most permanent results when the appeal is successful; but it is much more likely to miscarry. Economic interests are, on the other hand, easy for all men to see, and they furnish powerful incentives. When accordingly the emphasis of a virtue bears strongly on the side of enlightened self-interest, and the aid from higher motives is more or less hazardous, it is often well to keep exhortation and argument pretty much on this lower plane. Gambling is perhaps a case in point. The cause of morality has sometimes suffered from the disposition to take too high a moral tone about such a vice as that of gambling, and to overwhelm it with emotional reproaches. The man who likes to risk a little money for the fun of the thing feels instinctively that this is overcharged, and he is apt in consequence to react against it. It is safer, and often more effective, to recognize gambling as primarily a business vice, and to attack the gambler because he is a fool rather than because he is a villain; though even here a sense of proportion ought to hold. Provided a man risks only what he can easily afford, is scrupulous to see that no one else, either, is encouraged to risk more than he ought, and is successful in keeping the practice outside of working hours as a pastime pure and simple, gambling seems an amusement at least as harmless as some others in better repute. The difficulty, however, lies in keeping it thus within bounds. The gambling spirit needs no special encouragement to become a mental habit, for it is a part of that original lack of coördination and persistency in human nature which every consideration of common sense urges us to overcome. The tendency to trust to luck for one's gains may be relatively harmless in a fighting civilization; but

it is apt to be fatal under modern industrial conditions. And while we have no statistics for discovering to what extent the habit of social gambling affects injuriously the scientific pretensions of the business life, it may be suspected that the influence is not a slight one.

There remain two great historic virtues in particular —justice, and benevolence. They both are distinguished as primarily other-regarding virtues, having to do with our treatment of our fellow men; and in this way they connect with those constitutive checks on conduct to which has been traced the essence of the moral ought. Justice is perhaps to-day the most central of all the virtues. If the good of life attaches primarily to the free and successful expression of human nature, then justice starts from the recognition that other men have an equal claim on the opportunities which make this possible. My act is unjust in so far as I voluntarily interfere with the access of my neighbor to the same freedom of opportunity that I demand for myself; justice consists in the granting to every man of an autonomous control over his own active powers, under the limiting condition that he does not interfere with the same rights in other men.

It is perhaps natural to raise the question whether this does not limit justice too narrowly. Is it true, it may be asked, that I am just to my neighbor when I merely refrain from handicapping his efforts to exercise his powers? Suppose natural conditions are such as themselves to block his way to self-expression; does not justice call on me to remove if I can these conditions, and render him thus a positive service in the attainment of the good life? The matter here is complicated by the fact that justice is a political as well as a personal concept; and in terms of the State and its duties, such a claim may perhaps be defensible. But I am at present talking only

of justice as a *virtue;* and a virtue is predicable merely of persons, and not of institutions. And as the virtue of an individual, the limitation of the definition seems to hold. My neighbor can call me unjust if I interfere with him actively in the expression of his life; there is no injustice, nothing he can call a violation of his "rights," if I simply decline to go out of my way to remove some barrier for which I am in no sense to blame.

This does not mean that it may not be my *duty* to do this. But if so, it is because I have a duty not merely to be just, but to be *benevolent* as well. Benevolence calls upon me to do more than refrain from interfering with my neighbor and lessening his chances. It calls upon me also to help him at times to remove the obstacles to his own happiness for which I am not personally responsible. And here is the source of a theoretical difference between justice and benevolence. The duties of justice can be in a sense absolute and determinate, simply because they rest on what negatively I am bound to *refrain* from doing. The moment I pass certain definite boundaries I can be aware that I have become unjust; and so I am called upon to be wholly just, and wholly to refrain from injustice. But there is no such thing as being wholly benevolent. The amount of positive assistance I might conceivably give to others is unlimited; and therefore *just how* benevolent I ought to be is a relative matter, and can only be determined by each man personally for himself.

Meanwhile it might be noticed that in my capacity as a citizen or voter, justice may sometimes make demands upon me which in my more private capacity are left to benevolence. Under existing institutions I may often be unjustly profiting at the expense of others where no personal action would serve to relieve the situation, but

only a change in the laws which I by myself am unable to effect. As an employer or a landlord, for example, I may conceivably be in a preferential position which is unjust to other classes, since it exploits them, and so lessens their chance at life. But supposing I am convinced of this, I should hardly be considered unjust because I did not individually and voluntarily give up my extra gains. For one thing, justice would fail to inform me on whom to bestow them; divided among all the exploited class no one would benefit substantially, while to pick out one beneficiary, or a few, is arbitrary, and gives to them in turn a technically unfair advantage over others with equal rights. But I *should* be unjust if, with a chance to change the whole situation by law, I should vote to retain conditions which benefit me and my class at the expense of others, or even if I did not throw my influence positively in favor of a change.

The preceding considerations also help to indicate roughly the limits to a profitable exercise of the virtue of benevolence. As a socially valuable asset, its chief field lies in the work of removing obstacles to the free pursuit of happiness, and not in supplying the ingredients of happiness ready-made. Individuals can contribute in a more direct way here and there to the happiness of other individuals with whom they come in immediate contact, especially where they stand to them in the closer relationships of kinship or of personal friendship. But this is incidental, and wholly insufficient to provide for anyone the main content of a happy life. It is a much surer receipt for the pleasure of the giver himself than for that of the recipient. As a matter of fact the motive for casual benevolence, or charity, has always been in very large degree to minister to the complacency of the charitable person; so that for modern scientific charity one of

the greatest obstacles to be overcome lies in the self-indulgent practices of those who, in their eagerness for the pleasures of benevolence, refuse to consider the ultimate effects on the beneficiary. Indeed the state of mind which sets out to take charge of other human lives, and provide for them a ready-made happiness, is one of the most dangerous of the self-delusions which parade under the name of virtue; it spoils weaker natures by robbing them of their self-dependence, and the stronger it arouses to feelings of resentment. One solid benefit has a chance of springing from this attempt to produce happiness directly. It may under favorable conditions encourage feelings of human kindliness, and, in consequence, a mutual understanding which facilitates that human coöperation on which the good of all alike is dependent. But it has this result only when it limits its efforts strictly, and does not attempt to be interfering and officious; and in any case the result follows only from a personal relationship, and seldom can be expected at second hand and long range.

There is one very comprehensive virtue which remains to be noticed—the virtue of self-respect. This is the virtue attaching to that "judgment of triviality" through which deviations from the full stature of manhood and the worthy use of human powers is condemned. The demand of self-respect is the demand that we do nothing that will call forth our own contempt—a very wide order indeed, which covers almost the entire field of experience. The virtue is initiated largely by the need we have, for our own satisfaction, of standing well in the eyes of our fellow men; though when it stops here, as frequently it does, its place among the virtues is precarious. It leads to false pride, to the wish to seem respectable whether or not this seeming is backed by solid merit, to the intensive cultivation of the flamboyant qualities that most easily

appeal to an unthinking popular taste. But what is widely respected by others must have *some* merit. And when a mere external desire for applause is supplanted by a willingness to turn these same capacities for approval and disapproval toward our inner selves, with the safeguarding that comes from self-knowledge and a refinement of ethical perception, it becomes what is perhaps the most powerful and ultimate of all the defenses of the good life against the forces of anarchy and self will.

The Summum Bonum.—It will very likely have been noticed that in the foregoing pages I have made no effort to draw up formally a definition of the *summum bonum.* And the reason is that it seems to me easy to exaggerate the value of such an undertaking, both theoretically and practically. If it be true that the actual features of the ethical end for any man are dependent on the character of his own individual nature, then any possible formula which abstracts from this must be incompetent to serve as a concrete ideal and goal. It is bound at best to be so exceedingly vague and general as to lose any chance of affording guidance to the ethical life in detail. Even the formula which I have proposed for the individual man's ideal—and this at least gets closer to the concrete facts—does not supply such guidance; if the good for me lies in finding the means to a settled satisfaction such as takes account alike of positive desire, and of the negative sources of disapproval and disillusionment and regret, this is no more than the bare starting point for the actual discovery of the nature of such satisfaction in particular.

However, if some more general account of the Highest Good is asked for, it is not difficult to suggest an answer of a sort. If my good is in terms of a satisfying life which takes account of all the real potentialities of my being, then the greatest good we can conceive will be the

attainment of this same end by all possible beings who are of a nature capable of satisfaction. This to be sure is in the first instance only an impersonal statement of what the word "good" means in its collective sense, independently of whether such a sum of goods appeals to any being in particular. But there is no reason why, if qualified a little, it might not stand also for the good of individuals. Indeed, there is every reason empirically to say that the good of each is enhanced potentially by that of all the rest, in so far as partial goods are not found in practice to be incompatible. Through an appeal to various facts and principles of conduct we can with considerable assurance justify the claim that the most genuine human welfare is normally the outcome of coöperation rather than of competition; that the extension of sympathy has a power to add to happiness; and that a disregard of, and a lack of sympathy for, the possible happiness of others is to the developed conscience a source of discontent and self-defeat. And accordingly we may define the highest good more exactly as the good of all beings capable of satisfaction in so far as this is "rational"—in so far, that is, as it enters into a systematic harmony which reconciles conflicts of interest without sacrificing any element of good unnecessarily.

But it is difficult once more to see how this can throw a great deal of light on actual questions of human interest. As a matter of fact different ends do conflict. And not only does the formula provide no solution of the conflict, but it may tend to encourage an illusory conviction that all things work together for good, which may well serve to cover up essential difficulties. And even in so far as coöperative good *is* conceivable, to take this as our conscious goal makes impossible demands, I have already argued, upon our powers of calculation and prevision.

Neither as a test of what is humanly called for by a concrete situation, nor as a motive capable of making any wide and sure appeal, is the formula of the universal welfare, then, a practicable one.

This becomes especially apparent when we make explicit all that it presupposes. For satisfaction involves not only an inner activity, but external forms and conditions of good as well; and there is nothing in the concept of a *summum bonum* to limit it to possible and attainable, rather than to imaginable good. We thus are led to make a further addition; the highest good is the satisfaction of all sentient creatures in a world designed to raise this satisfaction to its utmost limits—a world of perfect beauty, perfect justice, and the rest. Such an imaginative reference to a world of complete felicity may be comforting at times; it is the notion of heaven familiar to religion. Even as an ethical goal for beings here and now, it may have the value of preventing a too ready acquiescence in existing attainment. But evidently it needs to be used cautiously if it is not to become a source of ethical danger as well.

Meanwhile I should be far from wishing to deny that there are circumstances under which the ideal of a life of satisfying activity carried on under the limiting condition that it recognize the claims to a similar satisfaction on the part of others, does become an ideal of genuine practical importance and value. It is not however as a *summum bonum* that it does this, but as an actual rule of conduct under specific conditions—in the field of *politics*. Here the formula loses much of its former vagueness, since it does not profess to tell us what good is as such, but only what sort of conduct reality imposes on us as members of a community or state, if we are to be able to secure ends that we assume already are known,

and known to be desirable. To the consideration of this last I shall devote a final chapter, in which I shall aim to bring the general method I have been recommending somewhat more concretely to bear upon a particular problem.

CHAPTER IX

RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

Natural Rights.—It probably is already apparent to the reader that the present argument proceeds on certain methodological assumptions which in more recent years have been somewhat under a cloud. It is explicitly "individualistic," in the sense that it holds that an understanding of the nature of conduct can best be attained through a psychological examination of the individual self and its activities, and that, in consequence, the concept of the "social" is not, as has been assumed in so many of the later developments of philosophy, the fundamental tool of an ethical analysis. This of course has not been taken here to mean that we ought to begin with the conception of purely self-centered and self-seeking units, and from this deduce in a secondary way the social life. We start from the self as we find it empirically; and such a self is already fundamentally social, in the sense that its interests are entangled everywhere with those of its fellows. The point is, simply, that when we ask about the *rational ground* for conduct, or the source of the rational hold it has upon the mind, we must look for this not in the interests of society directly, but in the interests of the man himself. Social interests need themselves to be validated. The *existence* of social sympathy is indeed a self-evident fact; but the *right* of sympathy to overbear all other claims is *not* self-evident, and indeed does not approve itself to our natural judgment as a universal right. That social good plays an enormous part in any well-regulated life cannot be questioned. But it seems possible to justify

this in individualistic terms which shall at the same time guard against the too common over-emphasis on the social, with its theoretical deficiencies, and its practical dangers.

The nature of this justification has, though somewhat incidentally, appeared already. It rests alike upon the positive content of good which the social interests introduce into life, and, negatively, on the fact that the moralistic and inhibitive sentiments find a special occasion in this social content, partly through the play of sympathy and a sense of justice, and partly through the need that social good should enter largely into the nature of the ideal in order to give it the weight and consistency necessary if it is to be protected against the "judgment of triviality." But this does not give us the right to erect society, or the "beloved community," into the absolute and comprehensive end of conduct. Such an ideal, when it is not adopted off-hand on the basis of the particular appeal it may make to certain natures, finds its theoretical justification in a mixture of two motives—the quantitative superiority of public to private good, and a certain interpretation of the self-realization principle, more edifying than precise or scientific, which uses the conception of the "social self" to abolish all opposition between the individual and the social whole. And neither of these two principles, it has been argued in a preceding chapter, can be accepted by ethics as absolute.

I propose in conclusion to apply the foregoing method of analysis to the concept of "social justice" in particular. The theory of justice may start from either of the two opposite points just indicated; and according as it adopts the one or the other of these is it apt to lead to different practical conclusions. It may begin with organized society, and conceive of justice as that which is

meted out to the individual in the interests of the "social whole"—the organism of society or the State. Or it may start with the individual himself, his claims and "rights," and find the standard of justice somehow in connection with what is rationally due these claims. I shall take of course the second starting point; and the result may be used to test to an extent the validity of the general method.

Rights, and more particularly "natural rights," is a term not in particularly good repute in modern ethical and political theory. The disposition is to emphasize rather the notion of duty, obligation, responsibility—some word which stands rather for the claim which the State has upon the individual than for the individual's claim upon the State. And when the occasion is one for preaching public morality to the well-to-do citizen, this may very well be in place. But as a matter of fundamental theory there are objections to taking it as a starting point. Anything which suggests that the individual is for the sake of the State, and not the State for the individual, is to be regarded with suspicion. And the notion of natural rights is, historically, just the weapon by which men have attacked the claim of existing institutions to continue when they came in conflict with the concrete good of individual men. To call a thing a "natural" right is to call attention to the fact that it is grounded on the basic fact of "human nature," and not merely on the conventional and the arbitrary.

Not that the phrase has always implied just this and nothing more in its historical usage. On the contrary, it has been tied up with a particular philosophical theory which has already been repudiated—the theory that there are principles of intuitive reason which can be used to settle directly human affairs, among these being a number

of self-evident truths that tell us about various inalienable human possessions—life, liberty, opportunity to work, property rights—with which under no conditions has any man, or any number of men, the right to interfere. It may be agreed at once that there is nothing whatever in the concrete which under any and all circumstances belongs to any man inalienably. Certainly no human society has ever recognized such a claim. But this does not touch the present point. All that is here asserted is, that men have in an intelligible sense a natural right, based on the fundamental character of human nature, that society should consider always their real good; and when it fails to do this, justice is always on their side. The term registers a protest against the practice of taking a human being ever as a mere instrument, and ignoring his claim to be regarded as an end. What in detail will be the form these rights assume depends on circumstances, which differ at different times. But where in any case substantial human good is unnecessarily sacrificed, men may, and ought to, stop talking about their duty, and speak instead of their rights. Natural rights is a militant concept, not primarily a theoretical one; it has always been the watchword of the dispossessed, the under dog, in the effort to gain some element of good withheld from him. And to deprive him of it is to put all the weight of legitimacy on the side of those in possession.

There are two main elements in the notion of a right as an effective political concept. In the first place, it involves a claim on other people of some fairly definite sort, an obligation on their part toward us. But a mere claim amounts by itself to nothing more than a pious wish; unless there is some power to back the claim, it will receive no serious political consideration, whether it deserves it or not. This is the obvious reason for the prac-

tical superiority of legal rights over natural or moral ones. They are felt to be more real and tangible because the backing is more easily to be discovered. A legal right is a claim upon other men enforced by the power of the State, with its machinery of police, courts of justice, armies, and the like. A mere natural or moral right, on the contrary, has no such clearly visible means of enforcement; and hence the disposition to refuse to call it a right at all except in a utopian and negligible sense.

But such a conclusion it is impossible in practice to accept. To say that there are no rights, in any intelligible sense, apart from legal rights, is to go contrary to natural and unavoidable judgments. We are constantly making a distinction between legal rights and moral rights. A thing may be legal of which we strongly disapprove; it *is*, but it ought not to be. Apart from the bare fact of force, or physical power, law itself gets its *rational* claim upon our continued acquiescence not because it is a law merely, but because it is a just law; moral right is always the more ultimate concept. And clearly there must be force behind it of some sort, else why should rulers take it into account? The most powerful ruler cannot make any law he pleases. There is a point, near or remote, where his subjects will rebel; and if they are capable of giving articulate reasons, these are sure to be in terms of justice, or moral right. Such a thing may be the law of the State, they will say, but it is a law which no one has a right to make; and at the point where such a feeling becomes strong enough, the power even of arbitrary rulers stops.

It is not difficult to see where the sanction back of this claim of moral right is located, though it may not be as obvious as the power vested in a policeman. Consider the peculiar case of international law. The claim is often

made that in international relationships it is foolish to talk of what a nation *ought* to do, since there is no independent higher power to enforce agreements. Nothing prevents it from acting as it pleases except the lack of physical power; if it is strong enough, international law is a dead letter, and the appeal to right a pure sentimentality and failure in realism. But as a matter of fact the lack of an enforcing power, definitely localized, does not actually destroy altogether the practical significance of certain principles of equity, as they have become embodied in the form of a gentlemen's agreement among nations. And the source of their influence is clearly the existence of a public sentiment in the world at large. This sentiment is called into existence not by fear of any police power, which is here non-existent, but through ideas that work upon the mind and conscience. If anybody goes too far in the violation of these, he knows that he will have to reckon with the civilized world; and the knowledge is in its way as real a restraining power, though it does not take effect at just the same point, as would be the fear of an international police.

It is, accordingly, the rational hold of certain notions of justice upon the human mind, a power vague indeed, and decidedly uncertain in its operation, but nevertheless a real factor in human affairs, which constitutes the backing of that claim upon the conduct of others which makes it possible for us to talk intelligently of a moral right even in the political field; since we are aware that men will under appropriate circumstances act upon such ideas, which represent in consequence a great, though indefinite, reservoir of latent force. The mere power of the ruler is not competent to evoke this sense of "right," any more than morality in general can retain its hold on the conscience when it is genuinely conceived as based on nothing

but the arbitrary will of an all-powerful God. Power is a necessary condition for rights that are to have any chance in practice. But *mere* power does not create even legal rights, apart from the nature of the ideas which are aimed at in the exercise of the power, and whose appeal to the human mind is the ultimate source of political force itself, since men cannot normally be got to pool their physical efforts except in accordance with such ideas.

The notion of rights in this ultimate sense arises in the mind to begin with when we claim rights for ourselves, rather than when we concede them to others. The process is, first, I have as good a right as you, and only secondarily, You have as good a right as I. This importance for the individual which the concept has is the sufficient reason why an attempt to discard the word from our political vocabulary will surely fail. The fatal drawback to the effort to show that there is no validity to any "rights of man" is the fact that no one in his senses takes the denial seriously. Because the direction of human nature is inevitably toward ends, and because this sense of oneself takes the form of a strong claim for satisfaction, the emotional outcome of this claim—the feeling a man has for his *right* to satisfaction—is bound to be taken into account. At the outset the sense of rights is no more than this inarticulate feeling that the presence in us of any strong desire forms a guarantee that somehow it ought to be met—a feeling which leaves us with a sense of protest and personal aggrievement in case the fulfillment does not take place. The knowledge that I am being disregarded in another man's plans, the feeling of impotence when interests vital to me are held back from fruition because my fellow beings refuse to take me into account in their reckonings, will inevitably arouse in me an active resentment, which is the passionate starting point of all

my sense of rights. Such a feeling is of course far from accounting wholly for the distinction between justice and injustice in the enlightened man. But the emotional sense of aggrievement and protest called forth by any suspicion of injustice, however it may have been adjudged, does not in the beginning seem distinguishable from this purely egoistic claim to the right to satisfaction on the part of desire as such.

A verification of this might be found in the fact that there are a considerable number of people who seem honestly able to persuade themselves that right is bounded by their own desires, and who have no trouble in developing an apparently genuine sense of injury and injustice when for whatever reason things do not go their way. Indeed it is probable that everyone finds at times his emotional feeling following thus the line of personal interest, even when his reason may tell him that it has no valid foundation. And that as a matter of conscious theory also men naturally tend to accept validity for their cravings, would be suggested by the wide popularity of such an argument as that which infers the truth of immortality from the presence in us of a longing for it—an argument which seems to presuppose the inherent injustice of things if the demand is not met. Let me repeat that the feeling on our part is not put forth here as proof of an independently based right. The whole point is, on the contrary, that the search for any further answer to the question, What right have I to be satisfied? is illegitimate, since the very root and content of the recognition of rights lies in this self-evident character that human desire bears within its own nature.

It is of some practical importance to keep in mind this impulsive and non-rational background. Where it is not actively in evidence, the question of rights never rises to

the dignity of a live issue. If people do not want anything very badly, if they are not inclined to resentment, if they take it as a matter of course that they should do as they are told by their superiors, they do not yet possess rights in any effective political sense, and the attempt to bestow rights upon them gratuitously will probably fail. For that matter, it will seldom be attempted. It is very infrequently that a powerful class voluntarily recognizes rights in its inferiors. It may feel that it has moral duties toward them, and try to perform these conscientiously; but it will resent it if the performance is claimed as a right on the other side. The attitude of masters to slaves, of employers to workmen, of women to their domestic servants, illustrates typically this natural disposition. A woman may try to deal benevolently with her domestics; but for an inferior to claim any treatment other than the mistress sees fit to accord is at once set down as insolence. So an employer will often cheerfully grant a benefit to his employees, who would take umbrage immediately if a union presented this as a demand. The reason usually lies, not in any particular moral turpitude, but simply in the fact that the driving force of the notion of rights *is* found in personal experience; and if we have not had the fortune to have our own rights outraged in this particular way, we are not likely to take very seriously the state of mind of others. Nevertheless this is fatal to any genuine conception of a democratic good. Resentment and trouble-making on the part of inferiors may not be soothing to the nerves, but it is a necessary condition for the extension of human rights.

Justice.—It is evident, however, that the idea of rights cannot be limited to their merely self-assertive quality. The feeling of rebellion which stirs in me when I contemplate an unjust invasion of my rights may find its explana-

tion in the upheaval of my instincts against a force threatening to put restraint upon their freedom. But what we have to explain is not a feeling merely, but a concept, an intellectual notion as well. And this new element reveals its presence in the conflict that may arise between our naïve craving for self-expansion and the perception that this is not always consistent with the rules of "justice." It is this new word that sums up expressly the fuller content of the idea of rights.

As the word "rights" lays emphasis on the positive claims of the individual who urges them, so justice brings to the front the idea of a limit to such claims. Its distinctive ingredient is an intellectual one—the notion of a curb put upon the boundless desire for self-gratification, and bringing it under an ideal law of balance and proportion. More explicitly, the problem of justice is primarily the problem of reconciling the conflicting demands of different individuals; it goes beyond the primitive feeling of rights through its introduction of the rights of other men also.

The transition from an egoistic demand for one's own satisfaction to a recognition that the claims of other people have also a right to be considered, stands in need of some mediation. That a man will feel himself abused when he is interfered with, no one requires to have proved to him. But this cannot be transferred as a reason forthwith to explain his acceptance of another man's similar claims. It is this other man's desire now that is in question; and I might certainly have a strong craving for my own gratification without being necessitated to feel the same about his. And in particular when his desires clash with mine, they are bound to go under unless something more is present.

The sentiment that has the closest affinity with the idea

of justice is the sentiment of *fair play*. The disinterested recognition that I as a unit am on a par with any other similar unit may have to a certain type of mind a real compelling force to make him hesitate to give to himself, still more to any other single unit, a preferential position. It would be too much to claim that such a motive is by itself powerful enough in most cases to counteract the influence of our natural egoism. It is however true that on the whole the more clear-headed a man is, and the more jealous of his intellectual integrity, the more such considerations weigh with him. It would probably be found that as a rule scientists are within their lights more ready to be just in their dealings than are men busied less constantly with impartial affairs of reason; and science has if anything a tendency to deaden the social sympathies. And probably the appeal, too, is much more general than critics of human nature might be inclined to admit. Almost any reasonable man will feel impelled to find some excuse for himself if he is convicted of sacrificing a greater to a lesser number, or if he lays claim to a reward obviously disproportionate to his services; and the need for an excuse points to a sense in his own mind that things are not quite as they should be. It is no doubt easier to feel this when one is standing off and observing other men, without any personal concern in the outcome. But then when one has once recognized it, he will, if he is at all clear-headed, be led to apply it to himself, and to admit that there is no more reason why a special dispensation should be due to him than to the outsider to whom his impartial judgment has already denied it. Or he learns to regard with approval fair play in another when it works to his own advantage; and then if he reverses the judgment of approbation in his own case, he gets a disagreeable sense of intellectual inconsistency.

This semi-æsthetic dislike of a failure in proportion becomes more pronounced when the situation is viewed in its larger aspects. The spectacle of a world ruled by injustice and inequality is naturally repugnant to a mind endued with any tincture of the scientific love of order. The confusion, the incalculability, the openness to all the vicissitudes of brute force or blind luck, the absence of any intrinsic fitness in the outcome such as the mind can rest in, the substitution of multitudinous conflicting ends governed by private caprice for an objective and comprehensive Reason in things, are considerations that get an ever-increasing weight with the displacement of the romantic by the scientific temper. And along with this preference on the part of a reasonable creature for being reasonable or consistent, there is often mingled another element. The man who disdains to take an unfair advantage because it distorts the rational scheme of things, wherein he counts for only one, is apt also to be a man with a keen sense of personal dignity, who would feel it a reflection on his powers that he should have to think of himself as needing special favors in order to hold his own.

The second emotional element to be mentioned as entering into the appeal of justice is in itself more common, and perhaps more powerful, though it also is related less intimately to the inner nature of the concept. A purely emotional *sympathy* is notoriously not sure of being effective as a means to finished justice, even while it emphasizes the good of others. It may lead me to subordinate the rights of self; but too much self-sacrifice is as far from justice on the one side as selfishness is on the other. And the unreasoning exercise of sympathy is always liable to exalt the claims of some partial object of sympathy over equal or superior claims; so that it

may result in indiscriminate benevolence, or an extreme of vengeance, as readily as in strict justice.

Still, without this ability to enter sympathetically into the feelings of others, justice would prove to be very inadequately motivated. And a certain form of sympathy is indeed practically essential to the transition from the individual to the social. We can distinguish, that is, the power of sympathy as it enables us to realize another man's sufferings by their reflection back into our own passive emotional life—pity is the more unambiguous word— and as it leads us to put ourselves actually into his situation on its active and assertive side. As the primary emotional root of justice is not the pain that comes to us as a secondary consequence of the aggression of others, but the immediate swelling of revolt on the part of an active impulse which finds itself prevented from expression, so when a man protests emotionally against an act of injustice which does not touch himself, he is not so likely to be found dwelling upon the indirect consequences of the unjust act in terms of the suffering it occasions, as he is to feel rising within his breast a reflex wave of the same indignation he would experience if he were in similar circumstances. Without this power of transferring himself through sympathy to another's situation, the sentiment of fair play would get little opportunity for exercise.

The two elements in the analysis of justice which I have here distinguished as emotional are also of the sort that ordinarily would be called "disinterested." This involves a distinction about which quibbles may be raised; but it is a perfectly clear one to common sense. I can without any doubt have a large personal concern both in men and things which is quite different from the concern that in common language would be called a selfish one. Naturally

it is *my* concern, and the satisfaction of *my* interest. But a happiness which has as its presupposition and occasion another person's happiness, it is an abuse of language to call selfish. And the actual content of man's life, and so of justice as an expression of his life, is very greatly modified by the existence of this peculiar twist in his make-up which enables him to get satisfaction through the satisfaction of others.

But while we might prefer perhaps as a matter of sentiment to make our appeal wholly to such motives, we are bound to recognize that they vary too much in different men, and can be too little counted on with safety, to supply often the most effective line of attack. Disinterested feelings are not only less intense to begin with, but they are very insecure and open to accident; they have only to come in conflict with things that matter personally to us to run the risk of being overpowered and annulled. Hence the practical insufficiency, except for very short spurts, of that type of reconciliation between the individual and society which is usually called humanitarian. Only very incompletely does this touch the fundamental sources of satisfaction which affect the self on its more purely egoistic side. And accordingly we have to ask on what general grounds we are able to enlist self-interest also on the side of justice.

The general logic of the transition lies on the surface. No one who is at all intelligent can fail to see that what he lays claim to for himself, his neighbor likewise is bound from his own standpoint to lay claim to for *himself*. And the passage to my own recognition of these foreign claims would be brought about if I were to find them implicated in my own satisfaction. Now although I may feel the force of my own rights as a passionate demand, and still decline to entertain those of others, I cannot make of

them a *social concept*, cannot argue about them and present them to others for their recognition, without generalizing them, and so implicitly granting to the other man the right to use the same words with reference to himself. The notion of justice is thus a concept of reason, whose practical force depends upon the fact that men have discovered that on the whole discussion and argument is a useful way of getting many of the things they want; and in the field of rational discussion there is nothing to limit rights to oneself or to certain favored beings. You cannot possibly justify yourself in doing something that you blame your opponent for doing; you can *do* it, but only by consenting to forego rational justification. Argument implies general principles as its basis; a rational right is therefore by definition something that can be made general. Stopping short of this, it thereby loses its power to carry rational conviction. A man may claim a right for himself while refusing the same right to someone else, and may get away with it. But he can hardly be surprised if the other man fails to admit the force of his reasons when he tries to *show* that it was his right. And since persuasion of others is the end of an appeal to rights, unless he can produce conviction he has wasted his breath. What you claim for yourself, every man whatsoever has the same right to claim for himself, *unless* you can show definite reasons, that a reasonable being is bound to admit, why the principle applies in the one instance and not in the other. And the reasons must be themselves general ones; it is not enough to make the difference consist merely in the fact that I am I, and that you are someone else. Of course we may invent reasons to persuade *ourselves*, and keep ourselves in countenance. But if we expect to persuade others also, we must consider their state of mind as well as our own.

Apart then from the presence of a natural desire in men to be reasonable, the strength of the appeal to justice will depend upon the motives for resorting to argument rather than to force. I have no intention of maintaining that the superiority of argument is a thing that can always successfully be defended. On the contrary, men have been pretty generally convinced that force is sometimes the only resort. When there is a deadlock and men refuse to abandon conflicting aims, nothing is left to do but fight it out. But this very statement of the situation implies that in another sense reason is more final than force. We are not merely making use of force in such a case; if that were all, there would be no reason why we should not equally fall back on it always. We are *justifying* the use of force rationally, by showing that it is the only way left to get a decision. Force is not a substitute for reason in human affairs; it is an element in a rational situation. And its rational *value* lies in the fact that by calling attention to the probability of its use, we can often gain the concessions which make actual resort to it unnecessary.

It is scarcely necessary to stop upon the grounds in experience for the judgment that mutual agreement on the basis of reason is preferable to a selfish exploitation of others by force. There is, first, the more obvious loss that comes from the wear and tear of conflict—loss to life, property, health, and the like. A less noticeable but even more serious loss is to be found in the way in which warfare drains off intellectual energy, and takes it away from the business of understanding and conquering the world for man's benefit. In the second place, men progressively discover that their interests are not nearly so inconsistent as they start out by believing. They are much more likely to serve themselves by allowing their

neighbors also a chance, and coöperating with them, than by trying to get everything into their own hands; this is the great lesson which modern industry in particular has taught. And, finally, one must recognize the positive value, for the individual himself, of those more disinterested activities in which men find an emotional exaltation and an enlargement of life. Apart from the satisfaction that comes from friendly coöperation, and from living in an atmosphere of good will rather than of hostility, on a still larger scale there is the appeal that is made to a man by the thought of his connection with big movements and world tendencies. A successful man usually has some imagination; and it is not immaterial to him to find himself identified with a losing cause. Convince him that "justice" is going to win over men's minds in the end, and it will hardly be enough for him that by helping stand it off he can add meanwhile to his private bank account. Certainly it would argue some meanness of spirit in a man if the thought made no appeal to him that he would go down in history classed among the narrow-minded obstructionists to good causes—with those who wilfully for their selfish ends fostered human slavery, or exploited the labor of helpless women and children, or supplied rotten food to the armies of a nation in peril.

Summary.—To summarize, a "right" is an instrument for the attainment of desirable ends, brought into existence in the first place by the personal aggrievement which arises when we feel our aims thwarted. As a tool, it does not pretend to rest upon our ability to demonstrate philosophically a universal truth, but upon the fact that it is practically useful for securing what we desire. Thus the right to liberty differs materially, for example, from the right to immortality. We cannot justify our right to immortality, because we are entirely unable to wrest it

from the hands of powers who might be conceived able to bestow it. We *can* justify the right to liberty, to the extent to which the assertion of its validity aids us to secure its realization. "Natural rights" thus is a fighting concept, incidental to the process of reform, and necessary, with a continual change of content in detail, so long as men are engaged in experimenting to find out the conditions under which they can enjoy the fullest and freest life. More definitely, such rights invariably point to divisions or classes in human society, and a claim by some class in particular to opportunities not yet secured, though familiar to them through their possession by a more privileged group. They involve, in other words, an advance toward greater human equality. We do not speak of rights as against nature, when we set out to wrest from nature a general extension of human good; rights are incident to the warfare of man with his more favored fellow man.

It is important to keep this practical situation in mind if we are to do justice to the historical significance of the concept. The theorist, since he is not concerned himself to use the concept but only to speculate about it, is very apt to think in terms of things that have been claimed as rights in the past, abstracted from their actual function in history. And so regarded, it is in truth difficult to justify for them any distinctive theoretical standing. The moment we make them specific we discover, on the one hand, that no such specific right is inalienable, since always circumstances can be imagined that would make it no longer proper for society to guarantee it; and on the other hand, if we trace them back to a matter of principle, there is nothing to justify any particular group of rights in monopolizing the title "natural" to the exclusion of innumerable other forms of possible

human good. But this is to overlook the fact that the separation which theory by itself cannot make on grounds of principle is in history made for us by the concrete circumstances of the situation, in so far as there comes to consciousness in a mass of men the recognition that, for no principled reason, this or that element of human good is being withheld from them which others with no better right enjoy.

We cannot therefore stop with the mere formal statement of a right, but must go on to interpret it in each case by reference to the actual conditions of its emergence. It has been one of the real hindrances to progress that the form which a "natural right" takes on some particular occasion in history presently becomes stereotyped and sacred, and so causes men to lose sight of the real motive back of it—human satisfaction, and the release of human energy. A familiar illustration may be found in the way in which the traditional right to liberty of contract, originating in a protest against the unintelligent restrictions of government or custom, has been transferred uncritically to the entirely different conditions of modern competitive business. The "right" of the workman to put himself, by refusing coöperation with his fellow workmen, in the grip of economic forces which he is quite powerless to control, is clearly, when translated into its concrete consequences, a very different thing from that right to liberty for which men have contended in the past; to hold the form while ignoring the substance is to lose touch with reality.

In the second place, if a natural right—a right, namely, for which men are still contending as against some existing disability—has no legal force back of it, and if nevertheless, to be an effective claim at all, it must have some way of influencing the conduct of others, on what

does this influence depend? I have answered, On reason, meaning by this that a moral or natural right is genuine only in so far as it can be put in a way that will persuade others voluntarily to concede it. And it can do this only as it takes the form of a general principle which applies, not to me as a special case, but to everyone alike whom it is necessary to persuade. If I claim a special privilege I must always be prepared to answer the question, Why a difference in your particular case? And the only answer that can be admitted is, that the exception is expedient as a means of securing expansion to others as well. Any purely general statement that we can make about rights will attach accordingly not to claims in particular, but only to this general claim to satisfaction, to be interpreted as the special occasion requires. Having got back to this, we can go no further. The general claim to a right to live the life that calls into exercise one's powers, subject to the rights of others to the same thing, is ultimate. Ask a man why he should have this right, and he can answer only by pointing to the right itself as self-evident. This *is* life, this is the essence of good; and to refuse it is to take at one blow all the meaning from the word good, and so from justice as a form and expression of the good. A natural right is what a man cannot give up without violating his essential nature. It may be in accordance with justice that a few men only should possess the right to vote; it cannot possibly be just that only a few men should have the opportunity to live a satisfying life. Conceivably you might be able to convince all men of the truth of the former statement; to convince them of the latter would be a contradiction in terms.

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